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THE  
**Relative Duties**  
OF  
*Parents and Children,*  
*Husbands and Wives,*  
*Masters and Servants;*  
Consider'd in SIXTEEN  
**Practical Discourses:**  
WITH  
**THREE SERMONS**  
Upon the CASE of  
**SELF-MURTHE.**

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By WILLIAM FLEETWOOD, D.D.  
(Now Lord Bishop of ELY.)

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*The Second Edition.*

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*Necessary for all Families.*

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TO THE  
INHABITANTS  
OF THE  
UNITED PARISHES  
OF  
St. Austin, and St. Faith.

MY GOOD FRIENDS,

ATTER Fifteen Years Experience of your kind Acceptance of my Labours with you, in the House of God, I have no cause to doubt but some of them will be also acceptable to you at your private Homes : And, of them, I have chosen such as I believed might be of the most spreading and most lasting Advantage, rather than such as might, possibly, please some People better ; as being very desirous of having my Rela-

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## Epistle Dedicatory.

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tion, and Affection to you, recommended to your Minds, in the most useful Manner, whenever God should please to part us from each other.

The Design of Christianity is to make People happy in this World, as well as in another: And the Way it takes to do this, is to make them good and virtuous whilst they live, by the Discharge of all the Relations they stand in to each other, whether Natural, Civil, or Contracted; i. e. by performing their Duty to their Neighbour. And therefore, if I can help to make you good Relations; you will, I know, be so far good Christians. But of this you will see enough in the following Discourses.

There is, indeed, no want of Printed Sermons in the World, abundance of very learned and useful ones being daily put out: So that I do not pretend to supply any Defect of this Nature, or to correct

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rect the Mistakes of any. But I use the Liberty I have in common with other Writers, and give you some of mine among the rest. And if I say, I believe you will be something readier to read mine, than those of others, you know (as I said above) the Relation I have long had to you, will somewhat justify such Expectation, and will a little excuse me, should I be mistaken. And there is, moreover, something in Variety that is very inviting, which may tempt others to read these Discourses as well as you ; and I am very sure that whoever reads them, will be no Loser by it, and should be very blameable in putting them out, if I did not think so. And that is one great Use that we may make of People's Levity, or Want of Judgment, in liking or disliking this or that Man's Way of Preaching ; that, amidst so great Variety, they will find something to like, and profit by ; which if they do, we are to account our Labours well employed, and well paid for.

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## Epistle Dedicatory.

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for. To make these Discourses more useful, there is something Casuistical in most of them; and such Rules, I hope, laid down, as will enable a Man of tolerable Judgment, and honest Mind, to determine safely in most Cases that ordinarily happen in Humane Life. In the First Sermon, I have endeavoured to treat Matters in so plain and easy a Manner, that, I hope, even very young People will see and understand the Reasons of their Duty: In the rest, I suppose more Tears and Consideration to make them useful. And, indeed, in all of them, I have had especial Regard to Citizens, and Men of that Condition, intending them mostly for their Service; whose Wants as I thought I best understood, so I was sure I owed them my best Assistance.

And because I thought that one Discourse would be as much as would be usually read at any one time, I have taken care, by a short Repetition of its Conse-

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Consequence, and Connexion with the foregoing one, to make it in some sort compleat by itself, not trusting much to People's Memories. When I had made an End of these Discourses upon Relative Duties, the Volume, it seems, was found too small for some Purposes of the Bookseller, tho' big enough for my own, who only intended to treat of them; and therefore I was prevailed with to add Three more against Self-Murther, which, I hope, will not be without their Use, since that abhorr'd Practice seems to gain some ground among us.

As these Sermons were chiefly intended for your Benefit, so I have chosen to direct them to you, that they may both appear, and be more yours than any one's besides: And if you shall, on your part, account yourselves, in any measure, credited by such an Application to you; I shall, I assure you, on my own part, account myself sufficiently repaid by the  
Civility

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# Epistle Dedicatory.

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Civility of reading them with Care and  
Diligence: There being nothing, but your  
true and lasting Benefit intended in this  
Work, by (GENTLEMEN,)

Your

Most Affectionate Friend,  
and Humble Servant,

W. F.

DIS-

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Duty

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DIS-

## DISCOURSE I.

## EXOD. XX. VERSE 12.

Honour thy Father and thy Mother, that thy Days may be long in the Land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee.



Intending (if it please God) to treat of the several Duties we owe to our Neighbour, *i. e.* to one another, in the several Relations we stand in, towards them; it is but fit to begin with that, which is, in Nature, Reason, and God's Appointment, to be first practised: And that is, the Duty of Children to their Parents, express'd in the Words of the Text, *Honour thy Father, &c.* In discoursing upon which Words, I will, *First*, shew, what is meant by honouring our Parents: And, *Secondly*, but conjunctly, shew the Reasons of our so honouring them: And, *Thirdly*, see to the Reward here promised, *That thy Days may be long in the Land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.*

*First*, What is meant by Honouring our Parents: To Honour signifies a great many Things, and takes its Sense, especially, from the Person it relates to. To honour God is one thing; to honour the King, another; to honour our Superiors, a third: And to honour our Equals, or Inferiours, is a different thing from all the rest. And therefore the Word must not be taken in the same Sense,

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wherever we meet it ; but the Party, to whom it is to be paid, must determine its Meaning and Extent. And therefore, since it is the Intent of this Commandment, to secure the Duty of Children to Parents, the several Duties of them, in their several Instances, are comprehended in the Word *Honour*. When therefore we are commanded to honour our Father and Mother, we are commanded to love them, to respect them, to obey them, and to succour and support them all we can. *First*, we are commanded to love our Parents : But because, properly speaking, it is not in our Power (whatever we may think) to love or hate, to hope or fear, when, and what, and whom we will ; but according as we apprehend the Thing, or Person desirable and lovely ; and that, upon this account, it will depend much upon the Parents Management, whether the Children shall love with that Affection of the Heart, which both the Parents and themselves desire they should : Therefore, by being commanded to love our Parents, we are especially commanded to take and keep such Courses, as will most probably secure and increase our natural Affection to our Parents, and to avoid and decline all Things that may any ways diminish it. To love our Parents, is so natural, so reasonable, so fit, and so expected, that few have the Confidence to own the Want of it, even when they know, and grieve, perhaps, they have it not : And the Want of this Affection being oftentimes the Occasion of our denying them that Respect, Obedience, and Support, we certainly owe, and ought, unquestionably, to pay to them,

them, it is to be improv'd and nourish'd by all the Considerations we can raise. How far the Consideration of their being, under God, the Authors and Originals of our Life and Being, will contribute to the exciting this Affection, is not easy to determine. The Ancients thought it would go a great way, and therefore insisted much upon it. They seem to have been very fond of *Being*, as if it were, of itself, a great Blessing; whereas, if we consider it throughly, it is, of itself, no farther Good, than as it makes us capable of *receiving* Good; for if we are in Misery, our *Being* is then far from Good, occasioning us just so much Evil as we suffer; and, all that while, our *Being* is being miserable.

If God himself should create us, with Design of being miserable, we could not *thank* him, much less *love* him, for giving us such *Being*: Nay, should he make us to be miserable after this *Life*, and leave us to be as happy as we could, whilst we liv'd here; yet we could neither truly love, nor thank him, for creating us. The very Certainty of being at any time miserable, by his Appointment, must make him dreadfully odious to our Minds; And therefore when we thank God (as we daily do) for our *Creation*, it is upon this account, that he has made us capable of being happy both here, and hereafter; that he has given us all the good Things of this *World*, *i. e.* Capacities and Powers of getting and enjoying them, and of attaining everlasting Happiness in the *Life* to come. It is always for something *good*, past, present, or promised for the future,

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that we thank God: And that is the sole Foundation of all Love; it terminates all upon ourselves, and our own Good; and where we neither have, nor do experience that, nor have any Good in hope, or prospect, it is impossible to love: And therefore the Love that Children owe their Parents, upon the account of receiving their Life and Being at their Hands, is only so far due, as the *Being* they give makes them capable of receiving and enjoying other Good.

It is true, that the very having given Life and Being to their Children, without any other Consideration, excites or creates a new and singular Affection to them, properly *Parental*; because we find the like in other Creatures, that are incapable of any Considerations: But yet, I question not but this Parental, Natural, and Irresistible Affection, is greatly heightned and improv'd in Reasonable Creatures, by the Hopes of deriving some Comfort, Credit, or Advantage from their Children: So that, although the Parental Love be the most disinterested of all Loves, yet is it truly selfish at the Bottom; proposing to itself Pleasure and Satisfaction, Honour and Credit, some Advantage or other from the Objects of its Love. But notwithstanding this, the singular and inexpressible Affection of Parents to their Children, deserves to be repaid with all the Love they can; because the Parental Love is hourly displaying and exerting itself, in all the beneficial Acts of Kindness it can think upon: It supplies all the Wants of helpless Infancy, secures from all the Hazards of heedless Childhood, and giddy

giddy and unthinking Youth : It shapes the Body, preserves it strait and upright, and keeps the several Limbs in order, and fits them for their natural Operations, and makes the Person beautiful and comely. And, to do this, it bears with many Troubles, and incommodious Hardships ; and tho' these Matters appear but slight, and are but seldom thought upon ; yet the Defects and Miseries that befall, where any of this Care is slackned, or this Love abated, are not small or inconsiderable ; they have, some of them, an Influence on us all our Lives.

But moreover, it is this Affection that informs the Mind, and regulates the Manners ; that trains up the Reason, exercises the Memory, and instructs them to argue, and understand their little Affairs ; and takes care to educate, and fit them for greater Matters : It is this, that brings them first to God in Baptism, and that keeps them after in the Ways of Goodness and Religion, by instilling into them wise and virtuous Principles ; by remembiring them constantly of their several Duties ; by encouraging them in Good, with Kindness, Favours, and Rewards ; and by reproving, threatening, and correcting them when Evil, or tending thereto,

These, and a thousand other, are the Ways that Parents take to make their Children happy ; besides those endless and innumerable Labours, Watchings, and Sollicitudes, that consume their whole Life, to make them happy with the Riches and good Things of this World ; so that whatever Benefits can be the Ground and Foundation

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of Love in Children, the Care and Love of Parents abundantly affords them. And though the Parents are oblig'd, by Natural Instinct and Affection, *i. e.*, by Principles of Love and Tenderness implanted in their Hearts by God, to do these Things, and take this Care of Children; and tho' they find their Pleasure, and Account, in so doing (for God, who made this Love, and this Provision necessary, hath also, in his Goodness, made it easy and delightful to the Parent) yet is the Children's Love nevertheless due in return for the Parental one; because that Love is founded upon Benefits receiv'd, or hoped for: And whatever might move the Parents, yet it is certain they design'd the Benefits, and the Children find and feel them: And therefore are obliged to take the Remembrance of them into Consideration, to excite and stir them up to love their Parents, who have done so great Things for them; and who were not only the Authors of their Being, but also, under God, of their Welfare, and their present Happiness. And though the Parents Designs, and Endeavours after Happiness, should not succeed according to their Wishes, as very often they will not; yet since there is no Want of Love and Care in them, the Obligation on the Child is still the same.

And I chuse to make the Sense of Benefits receiv'd, or at least intended, and the Hope of Benefits to come, the Bottom and Foundation of the Filial Love; not only because it is unquestionably so in Truth, and the Foundation of all other Love, and the true Cement of all Relations, and that

that which truly obliges to the Performance of all Duties, and makes them to become Duties, antecedently to all Commands, whether of God or Man ; but also for the Parent's sake, that they, knowing on what it is that Love is truly bottom'd, and expecting, desiring and approving nothing more than the Love of their Children, may take the greater Care to raise and secure this Love, by laying such Foundation for it, that it cannot easily miscarry ; for this will shew them, that although the Fondness and the Blandishments of Parents will please and gain the Love of their Children, whilst they continue childish, wanton and unthinking ; yet when they put away childish Things, they will want some other Foundation for them to build their Affection on : The Love, that was built upon their Play-things, will vanish when those are thrown away, and broken : And the Love, that should succeed, will want another Bottom : And that must be a wise, a virtuous, and religious Education ; and such a reasonable and decent Provision of Things temporal, that the older the Children grow, the longer they live, the more they advance in Reason and Understanding, the better they shall love their Parents, the greater Reason, the juster Cause they shall see for their so Doing ; they shall sensibly feel the advantageous Effects of their Parents Care. And therefore, upon this account, it is oft-times much in the Parents Power to secure the Children's Love, by the Obligations they may lay upon them : And let all People, when they find occasion to awaken and excite this Affection

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to their Parents within them, call to mind the many *Benefits* they have received at their Hands, as well as *Being*.

A *Second Duty*, Children owe their Parents, is *Respect*; that is, all external Honour and Civility. As Love comprises all internal Honour and Esteem; all their Behaviour is to be submissive, dutiful and mannerly, and such as becomes Inferiours towards their Betters. It is an offence against natural Decency, to see the Children bear themselves upon the square with their Parents, to answer them rudely or slightly, or to be wanting in *Respect* towards them, whether in Looks or Gesture, in unbecoming Words or Actions. And when Parents, through their Fondness or want of Judgment, are content to take off the restraint, to remove the usual Bars that kept their Children at due distance, and to admit them to Equality, it is great odds but they repent it quickly: Few young ones know how to use their Liberty, before their time. And besides, it makes the task of instructing and managing them much more difficult; for when the Awe and Check is taken off, (as it is by too much Condescension and Familiarity) your Counsels make but faint Impressions, and your Commands are constantly disputed. When Parents loose these Bands of Distance and *Respect*, if there be no Miscarriage on it, it is not owing to their Discretion, but to the Modesty and Goodness of the Children's Disposition. But I am speaking now of the Children's Behaviour, where the Parent has not made way for Disrespect, by any undue

undue Relaxation of Discipline; it is to be full of Kindness and Good-nature, good Manners and Civility. They are oblig'd to say things honourable of them, to pry as little into their Infirmities and Failings as they can themselves, and to extenuate and conceal them as much from others. And for this there is so much Reason and Decency in Nature, that it shocks us, unavoidably, to hear one reproach his Parents with either Vices or Infirmities, tho' what he says is true, unless it be done with great Concern and Tenderness, with Grief and Pity, and that to such as will make no scorn or mockage of them; but when they do it with Contempt or Pleasure in the telling, we cannot help abhorring such Impiety: The Hearts of all Men go along with *Noah*, in laying punishment on *Cham* for his unnatural and profane Derision; and love the Memory of those Sons, that would not see themselves, nor suffer others to be Witnesses of the Miscarriage of their Father.

There is, in a word, no worser Token or Prognostick of a bad Disposition in Children, than to see them wanting in Reverence to their Parents, in any kind: 'Tis probable they will never make good Citizens and Subjects to the Commonwealth, or good Relations of any sort, failing in those respects which are most due, and paid with greatest ease, and accepted the most kindly.

And that Children may discharge this part of their Duty better, as it is partly in the Parents power, so should it be their Care and Concern.

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10 *Duty of Children to Parents.*

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They must be careful how they live, and behave themselves in sight of their Children, and what Examples they set them; for if they make themselves vile and cheap in their Children's Eyes, by too much Familiarity, by light and indiscreet Carriage, either towards them, or others in their sight, they will in vain expect that Reverence and Respect that is due to their Relation. The Foundation of *Respect* is some supposed Excellence and Worth; and, in this case, some kind of Superiority; and when Parents admit their Children to an Equality, and make them conscious to their Indiscretions, Follies, and Mis-carriages, they do but invite Contempt, taking away the very Foundation and Support of all Respect and Honour. The Children should not, if it could be hindred, be so much as Witnesses of any thing indecently said or done by Parents: All the domestick Differences, the idle and unseemly Quarrels and Debates, the simple and unkind Words and Actions, that much too commonly pass betwixt the Parents, should be concealed and hidden from Children; For they observe and treasure up these evil Follies; and, secretly, at least, side with the one, and learn to hate or to despise the other, or entertain, too soon, a mean opinion of them both; which undermines all manner of Esteem and dutiful Observance.

Nay, and sometimes it comes to pass, that one Parent will, most unadvisedly and ungodlily, support the Children in Contempt and Disrespect to the other; and, to vex and wreak their Anger on

on each other, will make their Children miserable by Disobedience. This is a fearful Case, and a thing they ought at no hand to do; for neither Parent has Authority to absolve the Children of their Duty to the other. And though one of them should be of evil Fame, and bad Example; yet is *Respect*, and all exteriour Honour to be paid them, even when they can be neither lov'd, obey'd, or imitated by the Children: For this part of Honouring the Parents is always in the Children's power, and always to be done: And therefore tho' the Case may sometimes be so hard, as that the Children shall not be able to pay Obedience to the several, and, sometimes, opposite Commands of their Parents; yet it can never happen so that they shall not always be able to pay Respect and Honour to them both: And, therefore, of this they must never fail, for the doing this can never be an injury to either Parent.

And if one Parent should be so unreasonable as to require the Child to affront or disrespe&t the other, the Child would be safe in a respectful Disobedience, and Refusal; because no Parent has a Right of taking away another's Right; and each of them have equal Right to the Respect and Honour of their Children: And therefore the Honour and Respect that one requires at the Children's Hands, is of equal force to pay it to the other. It must indeed be paid to both, by all Children; and 'tis a most unkind and wicked thing, for any Parent to command, require, encourage, or be pleas'd with any rude, ill-natur'd and undutiful Behaviour of the

the Children to either of the Parents, upon any Provocation or Account whatever. Children are the Pledges of mutual Love, and the Cement of Affection: The use of them is, naturally to make up Differences; and 'tis sad, when they become occasions, or widners of a Breach.

But after all, there can be no such universally obliging Rules of Honour and Respect, as that all People should alike observe them: The common Usages, and Customs of the Country, are like to be the best Standard and Measure of Respect and Honour: And there seems to be a Respect peculiar to some Qualities and Conditions, that were not proper to be us'd by others. Only this I think may be observ'd, that the meaner People are, the less they look after and require this dutiful Respect at their Children's Hands: And they commonly fare the worse for it; there being abundantly more Instances of Rudeness, Stubbornness, Ill-nature, Disobedience, and Rebellious Carriage among the Children of ordinary and mean People, than those of better Quality and Condition; which should not be, for the poorest Parents have right to Honour and Respect from their Children, as well as the Rich and High; and they both might and would have it, if they would look after it in due time, and require it of them; and it would be a great Advantage both to themselves and Children, to bring them up, though never so mean, in a respectful Awe, and dutiful Regard to their Parents; they would find their account in so doing, and reap more Comfort from their Children than they commonly do. And

And what I said of keeping Children at a Distance, is also to be understood with Caution and Discretion; it does most commonly and naturally preserve Respect and Honour, and therefore it is generally best to be observ'd: But the different Circumstances of Parents, and the different Tempers and Dispositions of Children may make great Alteration; and therefore are to come into Consideration. Some Children and Young People are of so Modest a Temper, and so discreetly Educated and Behaved, that all the Liberty you give them, does them no Harm; they still preserve a lively Sense of Respect, and never go beyond their bounds, but demean themselves Decently in the midst of Favour and Indulgence: These would be hurt by great Restraint and Awe, and the Parent would lose a great deal of Comfort and Innocent Delight, by keeping such at too much distance. Others grow Wanton, Insolent and Headstrong upon the least Indulgence, and know not how to Behave themselves under Liberty and Kindness; and fall from their Respect immediately, neither knowing themselves, nor others. This is the general Tendency; this is the Humour of most; and Liberty is hurtful to them: Restraint and Awe is best for these, and without them they are miserable.

The Difference of Age is also to be considered, as well as Temper, in the matter of Distance. It would be Weakness to expect the same Regard from the Elder as from the Younger: The Elder must no more be wanting in Respect than the Younger; but they are each to consider what is proper

proper and becoming them to pay; and so is the Parent too. No Age, no Quality, no Change of Condition, tho' never so much for the better, can exempt the Children from paying Honour and Respect to their Parents; but they will each of them make some Change and Alteration of the Expression of that Respect. This Honour and Respect of Children to their Parents, is not only Handsome and Becoming, but exceedingly useful to many good purposes in publick Government; and therefore all States and Kingdoms have taken care to secure them. And therefore I have chosen, not only to shew the Children the Reasonableness, the Decency and Necessity of it, and the Obligations they lie under from God's Command; but to excite the Parents also, to endeavour, what they can, to preserve and keep it up in their Children; having such Power, and so many Advantageous Opportunities of doing it, which they must not omit, both for their own, and for their Children's sakes: It would be better, if they would try to *Punish*, rather than *Grieve* for the Slight or Disrespects shewed by their Children; they would certainly Grieve the less and seldom.

And this would also make way for the readier and better *Obedience* to their Commands, which is the *Third* and Principal Thing to be considered, and certainly concluded under this Commandment, of Honouring our Parents. And, indeed, without *Obedience*, Respect and Honour would be meer Formality, and Mockage. There is all the Reason in the World, that whilst Children want Understanding to direct their Choice and

Will; they should have no other Will but that of their Parents; and therefore should obey whilst they do not understand. Even Children themselves see this, as soon as they come to Reason in the least degree: They see, that if they had been left to themselves, they had in many Cases come to Mischief; and therefore see how fit it was they should obey their Parents Orders and Commands. And People, somewhat older, see as much Necessity that *they* should do so too; and they themselves will see as much, when they have once outgrown their Childish Fancies. They will see that their Parents Wisdom, and Experience, and Capacity, was much greater than their own, and therefore fitter to Rule and Guide. I believe there are few People in the World, that have, whilst Young, disputed and repin'd at the Commands of their Parents, who have not afterwards chang'd their Minds, and found they were truly wiser, better, and more reasonable to be complied withal, than their own Wills and Humours; altho' for the present they thought otherwise. It is most likely that, having liv'd longer, stood higher, and observ'd Things better, they should be most in the right, and give the best Advice. The Parents must needs discern what is most fit and proper for their Children: And therefore tho' they may be now, and then mistaken, yet it is always safest to follow their Instructions and Commands. When Children obey their Parents, tho' they afterwards happen to miscarry; yet they have this to comfort themselves withal, that *they* miscarried in

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## 16 *Duty of Children to Parents.*

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in their Duty and Obedience; that they took the safest and wisest Course, and such as all good People approve; and every one is much more ready to Pity and Help such, under their Misfortunes, than such as fell into the like, through Stubbornness, and Self-conceit, and Disobedience. There is therefore all the Presumption in the World upon the Parents side, that their Advice and Commands are the wisest and most reasonable. And next, there is all the Certainty of the good Intention and Design that can be. Who should intend the Benefit of Children so much as the Parent? Why, they seem to live for no other end and purpose, than to do them good; they have no other Aim than their Advantage; all their Care and Study, all their Thoughts are fixt upon them: They suffer a Thousand Inconveniences for their Sake, and choose to live, sometimes, penuriously, and hardly, that their Children may live at Ease and Pleasure. And who should suspect the Counsels, and Commands of such, of want of Love and Kindness? And there is nothing more proper to perswade, than an Opinion that they do it out of Love, and design our Good thereby. Now no one can possibly be so assur'd of the Kindness and Good-will of any one besides, as of his Parents; and therefore the Commands of no one ought to be entertain'd with a better Opinion of them; and this would help to forward our Obedience to them. It would be well, if the Young ones would (as they are capable) consider a little with themselves. These Counsels and Commands come

from People that have liv'd a great deal longer in the World than I, have made Remarks, and had Experience: They have had Parents themselves, and either followed their Advice, or repented of not doing it: It is true, the Duties enjoy'd me are unacceptable to me; they are such as I should not choose, and such as I do not like; but I have often found myself mistaken; and I have now no reason to think myself wiser than they, who perswade me otherwise than I am inclin'd: I am but of Yesterday, and know little; I have no Experience; and sure these Parents have not liv'd so long for nothing; Old Age has something in it good most certainly; Wisdom, Knowledge and Experience, commonly attend it, and make them fit for Counsellors: There is all the Presumption of Wisdom on their side that can be. And then, for their Affection and Good-will, I have equal Reason to conclude on them also; there is no Body so like to wish me well as they; there is no Body has done so much for me, no Body grieves at my Miscarriages like them, or studies and endeavours to prevent them with that Concern and Care: Other People, as it comes in their way, give me good Counsel, and say the same Things, in effect, that Parents do; they warn me of the same Dangers, and exhort me to the same Duties; but I can plainly perceive there is a great deal of Difference betwixt the Mind and Concern with which our Parents speak, and those of other People, tho' good Friends. They speak with a lively Sense and Feeling, with Force and Affection, in great Earnest, and from the Bottom

tom of the Heart : As if they were to endure the Evils, they warn us to avoid ; and share with us the Miseries we shall undergo, if we follow not their Counsels ; so that they seem to be exceedingly interested in our behalf : And yet 'tis evident, they can make no manner of Advantage of our complying with them ; they can get nothing by us but Content and Satisfaction ; all they have already is ours in Design, and all they are getting still, and intend or desire to get, is for us. So that we can suspect them of no Design upon us ; and all these Things shew us most evidently, that what they say to us, the Commands they lay upon us, proceed from the truest, most sincere, disinterested Affection in the World. They are afflicted and undone when we miscarry ; let them be never so wise, or rich, or honourable, our Folly, Sin and Disobedience, will make them miserable : Although they lose thereby neither their Understanding, Wealth nor Places ; yet such is their Concern for us, that in all these Things they are not happy, unless we will consent to make them so, by being dutiful and obedient, and taking good and virtuous Courses : And, on the other side, let us be never so wise, or rich, or honourable, all that our Parents get by it is Pleasure and Content, for which (instead of taking ought away) they lift up their Hands and Hearts to God, and bless us. And can I think the Counsels and Commands of such People are not the best that they could think on, the most kindly intended, and fittest for my Practice and Compliance ?

None of these Considerations are above the Capacity and Understanding of young People, when they come to be capable of receiving and obeying Commands: There is nothing so plain and easy as to consider, that Parents love their Children dearly, and without Design; and are older, wiser, and more experienc'd than themselves; and therefore the fittest to command, and fittest to be obeyed. And though the Commands of the Parents do often cross the Children's Desires, and hinder them from pursuing their Pleasures; yet it is not because the Parents envy them their Pleasures, or deny them Satisfaction, to shew their Power and Authority; but because the Prosecution of their Desires, in these forbidden Instances, is criminal, and would be hurtful to them, although perhaps they see it not: They never command them to do any thing, but the doing it tends to the Children's Advantage; nor ever forbid them any thing, but what is hurtful in itself, or Consequences: And therefore, though the Children see nothing but Pleasure in what they propose; yet the Parent stands higher, and sees there is also Sin, or Danger near it; and sees how it will operate at distance, and what Fruits it will produce. And as they remember their Parents to have hinder'd them, when they were younger, from eating several Meats, or drinking several Drinks, and doing several Things, which they then lik'd, and desir'd to have and do, and griev'd and repin'd at their Refusal, which, yet, they are now satisfied, proceeded from no Unkindness, but turn'd, as it was intended, to their Benefit;

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so might they learn to conclude, that the commanding them Things, for the present uneasy, and forbidding them Things, for the present sweet and desirable, may be full as reasonable, and fit to be complied withal ; and that when a little time is over-past, and the Season of Pleasure somewhat spent, they will be equally satisfied with the Care and Wisdom of their Parents. And this young People would do well to improve ; they are capable of considering, and they ought to do it. Let them inquire of all the Neighbourhood, of all their Acquaintance that are grown up, and older than themselves (and the older still the better ;) let them inquire of all, or any of these, and see how many there are that will tell them, It is better, safer and wiser, to follow their own Humours, than the Advice of their Parents ; and how many, upon Experience, have succeeded in disobeying their Commands ; how many there are who are not griev'd at their Disobedience, and do not wish most earnestly they had complied with what was advis'd, or requir'd of them : And when they find that all the World agree, that notwithstanding the present Desires, and the Uneasiness of complying with the Commands of Parents, yet it is better so to do ; that they who have obeyed, are very much satisfied ; and they who have not, are griev'd and troubled, and wish they had : They will see they ought to conclude, that however unacceptable some Commands of Parents may for the present be, yet it is better to yield to them, than to indulge to their own Humours ; and

and that the united Wisdom and Experience of the whole World is a safer Bottom to proceed upon, than any present Longing.

These are some of the Grounds and Principles upon which the Obligation of Children to comply with, and obey their Parents Commands, is built, and depends: There are also others; but I rather chose to mention, and insist on these, because they are such as young People themselves, who are principally concern'd, may see the Reason of, and have Capacity and Parts to consider, that their Obedience may not be altogether blind and implicit; and because it is as probable, as any thing besides, that they are the Reasons, at the bottom, of God's Command, that Children should obey their Parents: And are also the Reasons why these Children should themselves, when in time they come to be Parents, exact and require, and find Obedience at their Children's Hands. This every one expects, this all are naturally lead to: Where is the Parent that does not think it reasonable his Children should obey him, even against their Inclinations? And should not prefer *his* Wisdom and Experience to their own Will or Understanding? And trust to *his* Affection, Love and Favour, rather than pursue their own Humours? And upon the same Account and Grounds that any one expects Obedience from his Children, he knows he ought to pay it to his Parents. Now Children and young People observing (as they easily may) that Parents universally exact Obedience at their Children's Hands, may very well conclude, that they

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shall do so too, whenever they come to be Parents ; and may conclude, that there must certainly be good Reason in a Practice that all the different Nations of the World agree and center in. And if they can imagine that all the World could not agree in any thing that was not reasonable and just, and yet agree in requiring Children to obey their Parents, they will quickly see that it is reasonable and just for Children to obey their Parents ; for the Parents could not reasonably require it, if it were not reasonable that the Children should give it.

But lest these Reasons should not prevail, God makes it a Command, and bids us *Honour our Father and Mother* : So that he, who is disobedient now, offends against *Command* as well as *Reason* ; against *God* as well as *Man* : And to shew us how fit it is to comply with, and obey our Parents, God calls himself throughout the Holy Scriptures our *Father*, and from that Title and Relation calls for our Obedience. And therefore stubborn, head-strong, disobedient and rebellious Children, ought to think upon these Things ; to consider all the Ties and Obligations that they have, to be obedient to their Parents ; the Reasonableness, the Pleasure, and Security of being so ; the Approbation of all good People, and the Blessing of God that goes along with it ; And, on the other hand, the Grief and Trouble of Mind, the Sorrow and Repentance, at home ; the Shame and Infamy from abroad, and the Displeasure of Almighty God, that attend and follow Disobedience to their Parents. They ought,

I say,

I say, to think upon these Things, and whatever else may forward them in the Performance of their Duty. But because there are a great many Cases, in which the Children plead Exemption from this Rule; and in which they do not actually obey their Parents Commands, and yet defend themselves as no Transgressors of this Law; it may be of some use to see in what Particulars they are oblig'd to obey without Reserve, and in what they are at Liberty; that the Duty of Children, and the just Authority of Parents, may be both of them secur'd.—But of these Things in the following Discourses.

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## *D I S C O U R S E II.*

EXOD. XX. VERSE 12.

*Duty of Children to Parents.*

**H**AVING shewn, That under Honouring *Father and Mother*, is comprehended Loving, Respecting, Obeying, and Relieving them under any Necessity, I had only time to speak to the Motives and Obligations, Children have to pay their Parents, Love, Respect and Obedience; and to excite the Parents to secure these several Parts of Duty from the Children to themselves, by all the Ways and Methods they could think on, as well for their Children's sake, as for their own Comfort: I am now, before I leave this Head, to consider some of the Cases, in which the Children plead Exemption from this Command; and to lay

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down such Rules as may, most probably, secure the Duty of Children, and the just Authority of Parents.

And, *First*, it is certain that all Commands of God must be obeyed, before those of Parents ; if ever they interfere, our Duty to God is most undoubtedly to be preferr'd. The Counsels or Commands of Parents must never sway so far with Children, as to cause them to do what God forbids, or to neglect to do what God commands ; because the Authority of God is first, and greatest ; nothing is to stand in Competition with it ; but then the Command of God must be plain and evident ; it must not be a doubtful and disputed Thing ; but full as certain, as that Obedience is due to the Commands of Parents : *Walk ye not in the Statutes of your Fathers, neither observe their Judgments, nor defile your selves with their Idols : I am the Lord your God, walk in my Statutes, and keep my Judgments, and do them ;* saith God to his People, *Ezek. 20. 18.* In wicked and forbidden Instances, we are not to be led by their Example, Counsels, or Commands ; but then must *hate our Father, and our Mother, and follow Christ* ; i. e. prefer our Duty and Obedience to God, to all other Considerations. Thus if Parents should be so wickedly inclin'd as to command their Children to lie, to steal, to do Violence and Injustice, the Children must refuse, but with Respect ; they are not at liberty to obey, they have an antecedent Obligation, they are tied by God to Truth, and Honesty, and Justice : *Children obey your Parents, in all Things, for this is well pleasing*

*sing unto the Lord*, saith St. Paul, *Colos. 3. 20.* But then it is explain'd in *Ephes. 6. 1.* *Children obey your Parents, in the Lord, for this is right;* i.e. according to God's Command and Will; for to obey them *against God*, can neither be right nor pleasing, and so we should have understood him had he not explain'd himself, and so we must understand him in all other Places. But of this there is not much Dispute; People do generally agree, that God is to be obeyed rather than Man.

But though Children are at liberty to disobey unjust Commands, yet are they not always at liberty to do or undertake even Things that are truly good and religious, without the Consent, or against the Commands of their Parents: That is, where the Thing to be done or undertaken, is not as certainly commanded by God, as it is commanded to obey our Parents; we are there rather to obey our Parents, commanding us not to do such Thing, than to do it, though it be truly good in itself: And such Obedience to Parents, would not be *obeying Man rather than God*; because such Thing is not expressly commanded them by God. The Case is common in the World abroad, though it concerns *us* but little. To retire from the Business and Temptations of the World, into a Cloyster, there to devote the Whole of their Lives to Prayer and Meditation, and the more immediate Service of God, is certainly (with them) exceeding laudable, and religious; and to avoid Temptations, by Prayer and Meditation, is certainly commanded by God:

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## 26 *Duty of Children to Parents.*

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God : But yet this is not lawful for Children to undertake without Consent, or against the Commands of their Parents ; and the Pretences, that are made for such a Disobedience, are not strong enough to bear it out. They say, that *to serve God no Man need to ask Leave* : That's very true in the general ; but as to the particular Manner of serving him, there may be great Need of asking Leave, because it may concern another : It may be to the Parents Prejudice to be defrauded of the Children's Service, or otherways hurtful to him.

They say, that *if the Father be Superiour, yet God is the Supreme ; and hath more Right to the Children than the Parents have* : This is also true ; but this Supreme hath bounded his Right by Commands, which are first to be observ'd, and after that the Parents. God hath a Right to be obeyed, and this no Duty to Parents can dispense withal ; but then this Right is only to be known by his Commands : The Children cannot say, This is a good Thing that I am about to undertake, and therefore God hath a Right to my Performance of it, unless it be commanded ; for many Things are good that are not commanded expressly to all People, but only to be done in Time and Place convenient, and by fit and proper Persons. And when Children withstand the Commands of their Parents, upon Pretence of pleasing God, they forget that God is best pleas'd with Obedience ; and that they neglect to *obey God*, commanding them to obey their Parents, whilst they think to *please him* in doing a Thing  
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that he has left them at liberty to do or not, and that their Parents would not have them do.

They say moreover, *That though the Parents have a Right over the Bodies of their Children; yet that they are to have the Disposal of their Souls, as being the most interested and concern'd in them:* And this is also certainly true; but obeying the Parents Commands will not hurt the Children's Souls; their Souls may certainly be safe without their entring into a Religious House, and devoting their whole Lives to Prayer and Meditation. To serve God, and be very devout; to pray much, and meditate often; are very compatible and consistent with staying in the World, and obeying the Commands of Parents: But to disobey, and grieve, and it may be injure the Parents by such Retirement, are not consistent with Religion, and our Duty, to either God or our Parents. So that to do well and wisely, we must obey our Parents Commands, of which we are certain, rather than certainly disobey them, in hopes of pleasing God, by pursuing our own Inclinations, of which there is no Necessity. The Children are indeed to dispose of their own Souls, and all the reason in the World they should; because they are only concern'd in them, and shall be answerable for them: And therefore if Parents command their Children to be wicked and ungodly, or to do any Thing that might destroy or hurt their Souls, they were not to be obeyed, or hearkned to: If they should command to renounce Christianity, or to despise Morality, it were nothing; they have no Right to Obedience:

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But when the Case is only of some particular Mode or Manner of serving God, the Soul is secure as well in one as the other ; and the Pretence of greater Sanctity, and the more advantageous Opportunity of living holily, is not a Cause sufficient for a Child to withdraw himself from his Father's Power, to which he is justly subjected, and is not Master of himself, to give himself up to other Government, where his Parents shall have no more to do with him : And if it be true, that the Children's Bodies are under the Government and Disposal of Parents, it will be unjust to deprive them of that Power, under Pretence of taking care of the Soul, which may also be secur'd the other Way. The ancient Christians were very tender of the Children's Duty to their Parents ; and therefore would not admit any one to such Retirement, Monastick Discipline, or Vow of Celibacy, without the Consent and Good-will of their Parents, though Things were then much otherwise, than now, or of late. And yet the Men, who, by these Vows and Promises set the Children at liberty from their Parents, are so restrain'd by Sense, and the Reason of the Thing, that they will not admit any of the Male Kind to make such Vow of Religious Life till 14 or 16 Years of Age, nor any of the Female till 12 ; which does not at all justify them, for those are not the Years of Consideration and Discretion : The Light of Reason does but then begin to fhine forth : They have commonly then just Wit enough to think they have more Understanding than they have ; to be conceited, confident, and easily

easily to be impos'd upon by the gay Appearances, and pompous Snares, that are laid for them. A more mature Age, and a Disposition naturally propense to a devout and solitary Life, might make such Choice more reasonably to be complied with by the Parent ; for Age and natural Inclination are the Things that most excusably emancipate and free a Son or Daughter, from following the Counsels or Commands of Parents : Though what that Age is, will best be determined by Custom and Consent of People. This Case is now out of Doors with us ; and we have not any like it, that I can think on, where Men pretend to free the Children from obeying their Parents Commands, upon the Account of doing *a better Thing*, the giving themselves up to God. I only mentioned it, to shew, that though the Commands of Parents are never to be preferr'd to the Commands of God, yet that those Commands must needs be plain and certain ; and that Children are not at liberty to withstand the Commands of their Parents, upon Pretence of doing Things truly good and religious, and *obeying God rather than Man*. When they obey God rather than Man (whom they should otherwise obey) the Command of God must be as evident as the Command of their Parents, *i. e.* they must be certainly God's Commands.

*Secondly*, It is also certain, that the *Laws of our Country* are to take place of the private Commands of our Parents : That is, we are not tied to obey our Parents when they command us any Thing contrary to the *Laws of the Land* ; no more

more than when they command Things contrary to the Laws of God. The Reason of which is this, that the Publick Good being greater, and to be preferr'd to any Man's private Good, and without which all private Men could have and enjoy no Good, it cannot be preserv'd but by Obedience to such Laws as are made to secure it: And therefore no one can have Right to such Obedience as would obstruct the Publick Good, which all Laws are presum'd to consult especially: And a Man must not compare the Benefits he receives from his Parents, with the Benefits the Publick would receive by his single Obedience to the Laws, but with the Benefits the Community receives from the Obedience of every single Subject; and then he will see that it is more reasonable the Laws should be obeyed rather than any private Man against them; for if one Son may obey his Parent against the Laws, so may another, and then more: And therefore it is certain, that none may; for no one's Good is to be considered in Competition with the Publick. If a Father therefore should command his Son to betray his Country, set the Capitol on Fire, blow up the Magazine, bear false Witness, give his Opinion contrary to the Laws, or be instrumental to the overthrowing the Constitutions of the Kingdom; he must not so honour his Father, as to obey any such Commands. He must say as *Ageſilaus* said to his Father, advising him to give a Judgment against the Laws; *You have your ſelf, Sir, taught me to obſerve the Laws from my Youth up, and I am now going on to obey you, in taking care to keep them.*

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They are, in all such Cases, to appeal to their Parents better inform'd; they are to presume them always willing, that the Children should do Just and Honest Things; and not so much to mind what they bid them do, when *Concern'd*, as what they would have them do, when out of that Concern.

These are the two Cases in which Children are exempted from Obeying the Commands of their Parents; when either the Laws of God, or of the Land interpose, we are to hearken to them. And even, in these Cases, we are to Disobey our Parents, with great Modesty and Tenderness; not with Upbraiding and Reproaches, with high and scornful Refusals; but by declining and avoiding such Commands, with all the gentle Arts, and Methods of Submission possible. *Even in a Righteous Cause, the Language of the Children must be Humble to the Parents*, faith Salvian: Because they cannot, or will not Obey, they must not therefore Triumph and grow Insolent. One should not easily appear to Understand that any Wicked and Unlawful Thing is commanded by our Parents: But at no hand we must comply with any such Commands. In other Cases, of Matters indifferent, Obedience is the sure side; and yet there is great Regard to be had to the Age, and to the Customs of the Country, and the Discretion of the Children; and to the Circumstances of the Parents, before one can well Determine of the Obedience that is due: Without considering these, and other Particulars, it will not be easy to pass a true Judgment in the most common Case, and the most

most necessary to be considered: And that is, the Marriage of Children without, or against the Consent of Parents; whether this be consistent with the Obedience due to Parents, and be not a Violation of the 5th Commandment.

It is not indeed expressly said in Scripture, that Children shall not Marry without the Consent, or against the Will of their Parents; but it is expressly said, that *they shall Honour and Obey them*; and it will be hard to reconcile Marrying against Consent, with Honouring the Parents; or Marrying against Command, with Obeying them. And, generally speaking, the Instances and Examples of Marriage, in Scriptures, are such, as shew the Parents had the chiefest Hand in making of them up. The Stile still was, That *such a one gave his Son, or Daughter, to such a one in Marriage*. So that the Law being given particularly to the Jews, and this being the general Practice amongst them, it is not unreasonable to think, they held themselves oblig'd by this Law, not to Marry against their Parents Will and Consent: But whether oblig'd by this Law, or no, the Custom was such, that it was seldom otherwise. 'Tis probable, that, in the Patriarchal Age, *Esau* might Marry against the Consent of his Parents; but *Esau* has all along a bad Character; and yet it is not certain that *he* married against Command; but only certain that his Wives prov'd very troublesome and vexatious to *Rebecca*.

It is also certain, that such was the Custom amongst the *Greeks* and *Romans*, two of the wisest and most civiliz'd People of all the World. There

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would be no end of Citations, to this purpose, out of their Books; they are full of them: And though there must be many *Examples* to the contrary, yet are there no *Rules* or *Precepts* in favour of the Children's Liberty; but when they take it, it is still with Blame. Nay, this Disposal of Children by Parents, is not only a Matter reasonable and fair, and approv'd by wise and good Men among them; and strengthen'd by Custom uncontroul'd and immemorial, but it pass'd into Laws and Statutes. They reckoned there was no Marriage without the Consent of the Parents, and the Children were all accounted Bastards: And Christianity for a great while made no Alterations in the Matter; the Civil Laws of Christian Emperors confirm'd the Opinion of the Ancients; and the Sentence of the *Church* went along with them: The *Canons*, and the Judgment of the best Writers, are all on this side: They still make the Consent of Parents essential to the Contract. The Laws of our own Nation take no notice of Consent of Parents; they trust it, I believe, to the Reason of the Thing it self, and to the Wisdom of all Ages, and to the Custom and Example of almost all Nations; but the *Canons* of our Church dare not venture that, but positively require the Consent of Parents: They [101] tell us, That it is not *Lawful* for any Children (unless arrived to the Age of 21) to make any Marriage-Contract, without the Consent of their Parents; or, in case they are dead, of their Guardians and Governors. And that is one good End the proposes in Publishing the *Banns* of Matrimony,

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mony, that the Parents and People concern'd may know whether they think fit to agree to their Children's Choice or no. And, that this End may not be defeated by the Secrecy of Licences, it is requir'd, *that one of the Parties should depose on Oath, that Consent of the Parents is not wanting,* before they can obtain the Licence. This Care our Church takes, tho' much in vain; which sufficiently shews her Opinion of the matter, how far she reckons the Consent of Parents necessary.

But to all this, it is but reasonable to hear and consider what may be answered by the Children. Marriage is certainly a State and Condition, upon which the Happiness or Misery of Life does very much depend; more than indeed most People think upon before-hand. To be confin'd to live with one perpetually, of whom we have no Liking and Esteem, must certainly be a most uneasy State: There had need be a great many good Qualities, to reconcile a constant Conversation to one, even where there is some share of Kindness and Affection; but, without *Love*, the very best of all good Qualities will never make a constant Conversation easy and delightful. And whence proceed those endless and innumerable Domestick Miseries, that plague and utterly confound so many Families, but from want of Love and Kindness in the Wife or Husband? From thence comes their Neglect, and careless Management of Affairs at home, and their profuse extravagant Expences made abroad. In a word, it is not easy, as it is not needful, to recount the Evils that arise, abundantly,

dantly, from the want of Conjugal Affection only. And since this is so certain, a Man or Woman runs the most fearful Hazard that can be, who Marries without this Affection in themselves, and without good Assurance of it in the other. And since it is impossible for any one to love with another's Affections, but with their own, the Parents must consider this especially, how they engage their Children to Marry, where, at the least, a hopeful Prospect of this Love doth not appear; lest, whilst they are endeavouring to make their Children happy, they make them of all Creatures the most miserable; and make them irremediably so. If there be Reason, that young People should be left in any Thing to themselves, and to their own Liberty, it seems to be in the Choice of those, with whom they are to live and die; with whom they are to venture being happy or unhappy all their Days. It is, without doubt, in nothing so necessary as in Marriage. *Do you not know (saith one of old) that Marriages belong to us our selves, and must be matter of our Choice? Our Affections are our Masters; not our Servants; and you cannot with all your Power and Might, nor by your frequently reiterated Orders and Commands, cause me to Love or Hate where you shall fix; nor is it in my Power to Obey you if I would.* Then is Marriage like to be lastingly happy, when both agree in Loving each the other: And therefore since I am to have a Wife, the Partner of my Bed, and of all the Joys and Sorrows that are likely to befall me, whilst I live; I must seek for one that I can like (I think) for ever:

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I do not say, that this is all as reasonable as it should be, but there is Reason enough in it, to make the Parents very careful and considering, that they urge not their Authority too far, in constraining their Children to Marry, not only where there is no visible Aversion, but where there is great Likelyhood that there will not be a good Agreement.

As for the Custom and the Practice of the *Jews*, and all the *Easterlings*, together with the *Greeks* and *Romans*, they do, indeed, sufficiently evidence the Power and Authority that Parents exercised in the Disposal of their Children; but they do not, for all that, shew the Reasonableness of such Authority; nor is it of the Law of Nature so to do. And besides, they had some of them Power of Life and Death, and did sometimes *expose*, and might, by Allowance, *sell* their Children into Slavery; which are Privileges that do not naturally or reasonably attend the Parental Authority and Relation: And therefore there is great Abatement to be made from all Arguments, that conclude only from Customs and Usages, tho' of wise and civiliz'd People.

The *Roman* Law-givers, (faith a *Græcian*, *S. Empir*) have put the Children, in the Parents Power, in the same Capacity with Slaves; the Parents are the Masters of them, and all they have, till they are emancipated as Slaves are, which other People look upon as Tyrannical. The *Roman* Laws (says another, *Simplic. in Epict.*) having regard, as well to the Natural

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Superiority of Parents, as to the Care and Pains the Parents take about their Children; and willing also that the Children should be subject to their Parents, without Exception; and trusting also, I believe, to their Natural Affection, gave them, not only Power to sell their Children, but also to put them to death, if they saw fit. I see no Reason to think, that Parents are, by Nature, Masters of the Liberty and Life of the Children; and if the Laws of any Kingdom make them so, they had their Reasons probably for so doing, and ought to be obeyed: But there is no inferring that the Children of other Kingdoms, where no such Laws have being, are obliged to the same Obedience: And therefore, tho' the Nations abroad had absolutely the Command of their Children, so as to dispose of them in Marriage, how and where they pleas'd; yet is not their Example sufficient to justify a Parent in doing the like, any farther than the Thing is otherwise fit among us; and Children, with *us*, are not tied to such a strict Obedience, in this single Point, only because the Children of the *Jews*, or *Greeks*, or *Romans* might be.

And besides, Regard is to be had to the *Customs* of the Country. The *Jews*, as all the People of the *East*, speaking generally, did not suffer the Women to go abroad as ours do; they went to visit a Relation, or a near Friend, and that sparingly, and mixed not with common Company; which, with the Modesty peculiar to that Sex, depriv'd them of the Opportunities of disposing of themselves; so that their Parents

only must or could dispose of them; and when they were once Married, they kept very much at home, and saw but little strange Company. The *Greeks* and *Romans* seem to have had more Liberty; but yet, as well as I can guess, not near so much as *ours* have. This, I take it, ought to make some little Difference; for if the Customs of a Country allow the Women Liberty to see, and to be seen of all, both before and after Marriage, they make it somewhat more reasonable for them to choose their Partners, with whom they are to live, not in Confinement, but at Liberty; that they may not afterwards dislike their Partners, nor be betray'd, by such their Liberty, into new Liking and Desires of those they never can obtain. And, for the *Sons* of these old People, there is yet more Reason, why they should be entirely at the Disposal of their Parents, than the Daughters; and that, because Marriage was not half so grievous to them, for they were allowed more Wives than one; and Divorces were cheap and easie; and they took great Liberties besides, with whom they could: And therefore if they like not the Condition or Person of a Wife, they either wandred from her Bed, and took unlawful Courses, (which they might do, it was so common, without much Scandal or ill Fame) or else they quickly found occasion for Divorce. And therefore to be Married by their Parents, although against their Liking, and Consent, was no great Hardship; the Customs of the Nation, and the Licence of the Times, gave them

them a world of Liberty: And this made it much more reasonable for the *Sons* to be entirely at their Parents Disposal, than the *Daughters*.

But the Case of Christians is much otherwise; they have no Liberty allowed of any kind; Christ hath obliged them to love each other, and no other, even 'till Death: Each Christian Pair is now reduc'd to their original Standard, and are to be, as *Eve* and *Adam* were to each the other, faithful and kind, without so much as hope of changing. This makes it to be infinitely more the Interest and Concern of Christians, to look they marry none but whom they love, and still intend to love, than of other People, whose Laws and Customs allowed them greater Liberties: And therefore it is not altogether fair, to urge the Instances and Examples of these sort of People too far in a Christian Kingdom; for they might much more reasonably (because more easily) submit to the Will and Commands of their Parents, than Christians in some Cases of Marriage can. And when Parents remember that their Commands are to lay Obligations on their Children, that will last when they themselves are dead and gone; and from which they never can be freed, though all the Evils in the World should happen to them; they will be cautious and sparing how they lay such Commands upon them, against their Inclination and Liking. However, there will always be some Difference betwixt Children's refusing, with all Submission and Respect, to comply with the Commands of their Parents in marrying such whom they are sure they do not love; and their

marrying where they will, without the Consent, or against the Commands of their Parents. The Disobedience of the one is much more pardonable and pitiable than the Disobedience of the other; because it is much more in People's Power to keep themselves free from engaging their Affections, than it is to settle them where *other* People please: And to refuse to marry where commanded, is not so likely to do any Injury, or Dishonour, as to marry against Command, is to do both or either. And yet, in Excuse of such Disobedience, as marrying of themselves, Respect and Consideration are to be had to People's Age and Condition.

The Customs of the World, and Reason, consent in giving People still more Liberty, the older they grow: They are not to be Masters of themselves whilst young, because their Reason and Understanding are imperfect; they have not Judgment enough to consider what is good or evil for them; their Passions and Affections are strong and prevalent, and always looking towards Pleasure; and they have not Consideration enough to correct or check the Disorders of their Will, and Desires: And if these be the true Causes why they ought to be subject to the Will and Commands of Parents and Superiours, whilst young, it is but fit, that as these wear off, and Reason and Understanding, and Judgment succeed, their Chains should also wear away, and their Restraint be lessened, and they should grow up to full Liberty. This, we see, is generally allowed in *second* Marriages: The first does so

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emancipate and free the Children from the Father's Power, that it is not accounted Disobedience, when they marry the second Time without Consent. Now this is not, because the Parents are no longer Parents, nor the Children tied to dutiful Obedience ; but because that greater Age and Reason make Folks fitter to consider themselves, and to look after their own Affairs. It is indeed a Maxim, That they, who are once emancipated and set free, do never return to Servitude ; and therefore the Children, being once freed from their Parents Authority by Marriage, come not again under their Power, as to a second Marriage : But, I believe, that Fullness of Age, Maturity of Judgment, Sobriety and Staidness of Mind and Temper, are better Reasons for Children's Liberty, and Exemption from some Commands of their Parents, than their being once married : For if a *Minor* marry disobediently, and be afterwards set at liberty by his Partner's Death, whilst he is still young and under Age, whatever the Laws may do, yet Reason certainly subjects him to his Parents Power, in the Choice of a second Wife, as it did of the first : He is not emancipated by his first Folly and Disobedience ; he still wants the Care and Tutelage of his Parents ; so that it is, at the Bottom, Age, and Discretion, and Ability to look after themselves, which do exempt the Children from the Subjection of their Parents in Matters that are so *personal*, and so much the Children's own Concern and Interest. And therefore Parents are especially to have regard to the Age and Wisdom

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of their Children ; and the Children's Disobedience, in these Cases, will be more or less excusable, as Age and Wisdom set them more at liberty.

And sometimes it will so happen, that the Children's marrying themselves, will be in some measure excusable by the Parents Neglect and Backwardness of taking such care, as is but necessary in many of those Cases ; and therefore some Laws have left the Children wholly at their liberty to marry at such an Age, if their Parents looked not after it before. These, and many other Things, may be said in Behalf of Children, either refusing to marry such as their Parents command them to marry, or that marry according to their own liking, against Command. And there is so much to be said on both sides, and so many Things to be considered particularly on each, that it is neither safe, nor true, to affirm, that all Parents, in all Cases, have a Right to the Compliance and Obedience of their Children ; or that all Children are at liberty to marry and dispose of themselves, without their Parents ; for neither of these Propositions are unexceptionably true. Parents have a great Power ; but they must use it, (as truly most generally they will, and do) like Parents, *i. e.* tenderly and kindly : And Children have a great Duty ; but they are not tied like Slaves in all Cases, and with Bonds that will last for ever : But when they do not obey, they must do it with Unwillingness, and great Reluctance ; and it must be in Cases of great and lasting Moment and Concern, and such, as, when represented to fair and equal, wise and understanding People, they may find

find themselves both pitied for their Trial, and approv'd for their Resolution: That those, who would be glad that Children should obey their Parents, may see it reasonable they should *not* be obeyed in these Particulars; for to say what the Truth is, the Affections of Parents are generally so strong, and their Intentions so good, towards their Children, that the Presumption of *Right* is generally on their side; and the Cause of the Children had needs be very just and righteous, and apparently reasonable and good, when they dispute or contend with Parents; because the Bias of the whole World is, with much Reason, on their side against the Children.

The Sum of what has been said, amounts, I think, to this: When the certain Laws of God, and the Laws of the Land, and of our Superiours, lay their Commands or Prohibitions on them, the Parents have nothing to do but to forward the Obedience of their Children; they are not to injoin them any thing prejudicial to the Obligations they lie under to God and to their Country, nor to command them in Opposition to them: And when they do, they are not to be heard or understood; the Children are to go on steadily in their Duty to both, and to *mistake* their Parents Orders, with Submission and Respect, and Tenderness. And in the Case of Marriages, the Parents are to take all due Care, to see their Children well dispos'd of, according to their Age and Quality, and Tempers; rememb'reng they are then laying the Grounds and Foundation of their Happiness or Misery; and not to let the Consideration

tion of Fortune and Estate so preponderate and over-weigh all other Considerations of Form and Favour, Birth and Education, Virtue and good Qualities, as to neglect them all : And when the Parents have done this, the Children are to obey as far as possibly they can ; the little Objections of the Fancy, and the Niceties that are commonly made on these Occasions, must yield to the mature Deliberations of the Parents. It were best, and most to be wish'd undoubtedly, that both the Parents and the Children might choose, *i. e.* that each should approve the other's Choice : And that, as *Homer* says of *Penelope*, she might be bestowed by her *Father*, upon whom *she* pleas'd, for otherwise they will not both be easy : And when that comes to pass, the Authority of Parents, and the Duty of Children, are both secur'd and reconcil'd.

But if this will not be, there will go near to be some Fault on one side : If the Parent offer what the Child cannot possibly assent to, and what the Neighbourhood, and wife and unconcerned Persons blame, condemn and reject, upon a competent and reasonable Information of the whole Proceedings ; if such Refusal of the Offer be made with Decency, and great Humility, upon the Children's part, it will not fall under the Head of sinful Disobedience : They may stand off with Innocence and Safety, and yet may honour, as they ought, *their Father and their Mother*. But if such Offer be made by the Parents, as a wise and good Man, in the like Case and Circumstances, may make, without Folly and

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without Injury ; and there be nothing handsom or material to object, and such as would satisfy a wife and sober, and impartial Man ; the Duty of Children so refusing will not be safe ; they must, for ought I see, obey their Parents in these Cases. And if Children, who are under Age, and wholly in their Father's Custody and Power, and Part of his House and Family, will venture to engage themselves, without the Consent, or against the Commands of their Parents, to their Dishonour, or their Prejudice, they will be guilty of sinful Disobedience, and must seek the Forgiveness they will want, both at God's, and their Parents Hands. How far Obedience in these Cases is also due to the *Mothers*, by vertue of this Commandment, both whilst the Father lives, and afterwards ; I intend, if it please God, to shew, with other Particulars, in the following Discourse.

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## *D I S C O U R S E III.*

EXOD. XX. VERSE 12.

*Duty of Children to Parents.*

**H**AVING shewn the Necessity there is, That Children should be obedient to, and govern'd by their Parents, in all Things, where they are at liberty by the Laws of God, and of their Country, and in common Sense and Reason ought to be at liberty ; I am, before I leave this Head, to speak a little to the Authority of *Mothers*, and to the Obedience that is due to them, both whilst

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the Fathers are alive, and after they are dead. The Scriptures make no manner of Difference betwixt the Obedience, Fear or Honour, due to Parents; the *Mother* is still included, still exprefed, with the Father: *Honour thy Father and Mother.* *He that smiteth his Father or Mother, shall surely be put to Death,* Exod. 21. 15. *He that curseth his Father or Mother, shall surely be put to Death,* Verse 17. *Ye shall fear every Man his Mother and Father.* If a Man hath a rebellious Son, which will not obey the Voice of his Father, or the Voice of his Mother, then shall his Father and his Mother lay hold on him, and say, *This our Son is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our Voice;* Deut. 21. 18. And, *Cursed be he that setteth light by his Father or his Mother,* 28. 16. And, *My Son, hear the Instructions of thy Father, and forsake not the Law of thy Mother:* And so in many other Places, where the same Duty is requir'd to be paid the Mother with the Father; and, in truth, there is equal Reason in most Cases, why we should do so, and in some, greater. The Mothers undergo most Pain and Sorrow for them, bear all the Trouble of their Infancy and Childhood, do all they can for them, and intend them much more; have at least the same, but generally a much greater Affection to them, and the same Interest and Concern for their Good and Welfare. And therefore, in Nature, and true Reason and Gratitude, the Children are obliged to make no Difference betwixt the Father and Mother, in their Observance and Obedience of, and to them.

But because the Father is also superior to the Mother, both in Natural Strength, in Wisdom, and by God's Appointment; and that there is no obeying contrary Commands; therefore the Children are especially to obey the Fathers, in Cases where they have power to command, and where they cannot obey both Parents together: They must never obey one Parent to the prejudice of the other: The Father has no right to command the Children any thing undutiful, disrespectful, or injurious to the Mother; but if it happen that the Inclinations or Desires of Mothers should differ from those of the Fathers, in the Choice of Trade, or Calling, or in Matches for the Children, or other things of Moment; so that the Children must displease one Parent by complying with the other; the Father is the superior Authority, and must be obeyed; because both the Laws of God and Man have subjected the Wife to the Husband: She is not presum'd to have a *Will* contrary to her Husband's; and therefore the Child disobeys not his Mother, who obeys his Father's Command, because the Mother is to be obedient also: And the Case is not very much alter'd, although the Father do not lay express Command upon the Child; but is passive and content, likes and approves the Choice he makes, although the Mother be wholly averse to it: In such a Case the Father is to be regarded, for he is the proper Superior.

But when the Mother is the *only* Parent, then her Authority increases, and she is then solely to be regarded: But the Civil Laws do generally free the

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Sons at such an Age, supposing them the Masters of the Family; and, by the Advantage of their Sex and Education, fit to govern, and dispose of themselves and their Affairs. The Daughters are, indeed, kept longer in Subjection, suppos'd to want the Care and Wisdom of the Parents longer; but growing up to liberty, as they advance in Years and Understanding. There can, indeed, be no exact Rules in any such Cases; for the Wisdom of either Parent, or Children, must necessarily make some Alteration in the measures of Obedience, in respect to some Commands which relate so nearly to the Children, as Marriage especially does.

And even in Cases where the Sons and Daughters may be reasonably presum'd at liberty, and would otherwise take and use that liberty; yet, unless it be a matter of great moment, it should not easily be ventur'd on, to the Mother's great Sorrow; for the Grief of Parents is not to be occasion'd cheaply and lightly; much will be suffered by a dutiful good-natur'd Child, before he will afflict and grieve his Parent: And since this is especially the Infirmity and Feebleness of Mothers, the Children are oblig'd to greater Care and Circumspection in their Behaviour towards them, to prevent their Sorrows; for every thing that gives them Grief, is a sort of Disobedience. I will end this whole matter with forewarning Children of what will certainly come to pass; and that is, that they will never be able to remember any Act of Disobedience to their Parents, without much Trouble and Remorse, without great Sorrow

row and Concern of Mind: It will dwell continually upon them, and haunt them like an Evil Spirit; they will wish a thousand times, they had behav'd themselves more dutifully, kindly, and obediently; and rather gone without their Desires, than have occasion'd any Trouble or Sorrow to their Parents.

The last thing that Children owe their Parents, is *Support* and *Sustenance*; and this is evidently comprehended under the word *Honour*. God commanded, (saith our Saviour, Matth.15.4.) saying, Honour thy Father and Mother; and he that curseth Father or Mother, let him die the Death. But ye say, *Whosoever shall say to his Father or Mother, it is Corban, i. e. a Gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me, and Honour not his Father and his Mother, he shall be free.* And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his Father or his Mother, as it is in St. Mark 7.12. God commanded the *Jews* to honour their Parents: But the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, by their Tradition, had sometimes made the Command of no effect, by teaching the People, that if once they had devote their Estate to God's Service, or to the Service of the Temple, either to purchase Wood, or Frankincense, or Doves, or any thing used about the Altar, if they had consecrated their Estate to Holy Uses, they were thereby discharged from succouring their Parents, when they came to stand in need; so that if either Father or Mother came to want their very Bread and daily Sustenance, the Children might refuse it them, and say--No, it is *Corban*; that, by

which thou mightest have been profited by me, is a *Gift*: The Estate, wherewith I might have succoured and supported you, is *Corban*, it is devoted to the Service of God and his Temple; and I may not sacrilegiously take away ought devoted to Holy Uses, to feed my Parents: And thus, saith Christ, you make void a certain Command of God, by a Tradition of your own, and set the Children free from honouring their Parents: Which he expresses in *St. Mark*, *Thus ye suffer them not to do ought for their Father and Mother*. From whence it appears very plainly, that to *Honour Parents*, comprehends the succouring and supporting them, under their Burthens and Necessities; and that this *fifth Commandment* certainly enjoyns the doing so to all Children. So the word *Honour* is taken in the *1 Tim. 5. 3. and 17 Verses. Honour Widows, that are Widows indeed*; i.e. Let the Widows, who are in want, and behave themselves soberly and discreetly, and chastly, be reliev'd and maintain'd amongst you. And *let the Elders, that rule well, be counted worthy of double Honour, especially they who labour in the Word and Doctrine*. Let the Ministers, that perform their Duties well and wisely, as they should, be accounted worthy of a Maintenance better than ordinary: Not that the *Jews* were at all inclined to be unnatural to their Parents, or to deny them what they wanted; but that such a Doctrine might constrain them to be so, if believ'd: And our Saviour's Discourse is particularly directed against the corrupt *Glosses* and the false *Traditions* of the *Scribes and Pharisees*.

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The Jews were remarkably kind and tender to their Parents in Distress. It was a common Saying with them, *You must Honour God, with your Substance, if you have it; but you must Honour your Parents, whether you have it or no, for you must beg for them: And more than that, you must work, tho' it were in the publick Houses of Correction, to help your Parents.* This, I believe, was the Foundation of the Parents Power to sell their Children; it must be, either when they knew they could not be maintain'd but by such Sale; or when they could not themselves maintain their Children; and therefore sold them, that they might live. The Practice is too barbarous and unnatural, to be supported by any other Ground, or Reason; nothing but such extream Necessity could make it tolerable: Such a Power is not then strictly just; but the Exercize of it is excusable, because 'tis unavoidable.

But all these things are determinable by the Civil Laws of Nations; and therefore they differ in several Countries: But all agree in exacting and commanding the Relief and Sustenance of Parents. *We must Honour our Parents exceedingly, saith Hierocles, affording them the Service of our Bodies, and the use of our Wealth most chearfully.* And amongst the Romans, if a Son were quite emancipated and free from his Father's Government; yet if his Father came to want, and were denied it by his Son, the Son, for his Ingratitude, was to return again into his Father's Service, and never to be freed again. By Solon's Law, the Son indeed might deny this Aliment and Sustenance to

his Father, in case his Father had neglected so to educate the Son, as to have put him in a way of making such Provision for his indigent Parent: If he had neither put him out to any Trade, nor taught him how to get his Living, it was presum'd the Father had in a manner *expos'd* him to Misery; and therefore deserv'd not the Return of Love and Kindness he had never shewn. But this was only to constrain the Parent to look after the Education of his Children, to make them thereby the more useful Members of the Commonwealth: It exempted the Children from the legal Penalties that otherwise might be inflicted on such unnatural Refusal; but it took not away the Obligation the Children had, by Nature, to provide for their distressed Parents. Even this severe Law tied not the Children to be cruel and undutiful; but intended to punish the Parents Folly and Neglect, by leaving it to the Children to deal with their Parents as they pleas'd, which otherwise they might not do, but were oblig'd to provide for them. For this Support and Maintenance of Parents, is a Thing so naturally and necessarily due, that no Laws can tie the Children not to afford it, according to their best Abilities. It would be due even to a Traitor, and proscrib'd; that is, bare Sustenance would be due from Children to their Parents, in such hard Cases.

These are the Duties Children owe their Parents; *Love, Respect or Honour, Obedience and Support* of all Kinds, whenever they stand in need of it; and all of them comprehended under *Honouring*

nouring them, all of them injoin'd to Children in this Command — *Honour thy Father and thy Mother.*

But because the Case of *going to Law with Parents*, is what does sometimes happen, and yet would not properly fall under any of the fore-mentioned Heads, and yet deserves to be considered, it may not be unseasonable to speak a little to it, before I go on to the Promise and Encouragement annex'd by God, to the Honouring of our Father and Mother.

If therefore the Inquiry be, Whether it be lawful at any time, *for any Cause*, for Children to call their Parents into question before the Civil Magistrate or Judge: It is to be answered *affirmatively*; but with many Restrictions. It is certain that Parents have a great Authority, but 'tis as certain that they may abuse it: They are not incapable of *doing Injury*. It is also certain, that Children are to be very *subject* to their Parent; but as sure also, that they are not *Slaves*, but may *receive Injury*. And whoever can suffer wrong, may also be righted: The Laws of God do no where forbid this; and the Laws of the Land are free and impartial; they make no Difference of Persons, and know no Relation; Justice is, in this Respect, to be blind: And therefore it is certain, that, in some Cases, a Son or Daughter may, without Offence of God's Law, appeal to the Laws of the Land, against their Parents.

In case of *Alimony*, if the Parent be so unnatural as to deny the Child its Food and Rayment, the Remedy at Law may be justly implor'd; and

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no one would charge, with undutiful and disobedient Carriage, a Child that should implore Assistance in such Case. So if a Parent should so cruelly use a Child as to dismember it, or make it lame, or do it any other lasting Mischief, the Child might very justly make the Case known to the Magistrate, and beg his Favour and Assistance. In these, and such like Cases, the common Sense and Pity of Mankind would teach us, that such Complaint were not a Breach of Children's Duty to Parents, but very consistent with it. And yet this is one Way of Children's going to Law with their Parents. But here, the Occasion must be, we see, exceeding great and pressing, and visibly, to wise impartial People, reasonable and just. It is not allowed to make even these Complaints, upon any slight Mischief; it must be sharp, and very near intolerable, before the Children must appeal to Magistrates: For though there are no positive Laws; yet Reason, Custom, and Consent of People, give such Power of Castigation and Correction to Parents, that the Laws forbid to any one besides; presuming always, that the Occasion will be very just, and the Provocation very great, when the Parents proceed to much Severity; the Laws still trust, as well they may, a great deal to the Parental Kindness and Affection: And yet they see sometimes, that there is need of interposing their Authority, and hindring Passion from proceeding to Extremities. And, in all such Cases, the Children are to ask for nothing but Relief and Ease to themselves; no Hardship, Penalty or Punishment, is to be sought for, to the Parent,

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by them ; that would be impious Cruelty indeed : No Thought of Revenge must come into their Minds : They will be miserable enough in having such Parents as will provoke them to fly from them, for Succour, to a Stranger, without the Trouble and Uneasiness of seeing them miserable, and suffering any Evil.

And as for Matters of Contract, Estate, Inheritance or Money, it must not be for any small Matter, nor for a light Injury, nor any Thing easy to be born, that a Child can implead his Parent ; the Hardship must be near intolerable ; the Injustice great and pressing, when a wise indifferent Man, or a Man's own Conscience can permit him to go to Law with his Father or Mother. We are oblig'd, as Christians, to bear *somewhat* at every one's Hands, and little Injuries are the least we can forgive to one another. And common Sense and Reason will tell one, he is certainly oblig'd to bear more from a Parent, than from any other : And therefore the Provocation and Necessity must be exceeding great and violent, when it is not to be passed over with Patience and Submission by the Children. It should therefore be plain and visible to all considering People, that the Parent is very much in the wrong, doing a manifest Injustice, violating the Laws of Nature, and putting off the Parental Love and Tenderness, before a Child should publickly contest at Law : The Neighbourhood, and World around, should be convinc'd of the Parents Iniquity, and see the Injury intended, or done, to be intolerable, and see withal the Necessity of seeking Redress at the

hands of Publick Justice, before the Children do it. Publick Fame should go before, and prepare the Minds and Ears of all that shall hear it; so that every one should pity the Children's Case, in haying to deal with so injurious Parents, and be concern'd to wish them Success: By all which, I mean to say, that the Justice of the Children's Cause must be notorious, and the Injury done them manifestly great, and grievous to them, before they are permitted, by their Duty, Decency, and Religion, to go to Law with their Parents.

The Duty, indeed, is somewhat altered in the Case of Mothers, when they hasten to second Marriages, apparently prejudicial to their Children. The Necessity of going to Law with *them*, is more frequent and more urgent than with Fathers, or with Mothers still continuing in the State of Widowhood; because they seem to have translated their Affection and Interest to another Family; and most of the Comforts and Conveniences arising from such contested Money or Estate, go to *strange* People, to whom the Children have no Obligation: And therefore that Piety in Children, that would permit the Mother to enjoy, in Peace and Quiet, what was perhaps in Justice none of her's, need not sometimes be scrupulous of recovering it from her, since she herself would have the least Advantage by it; but it would go to *utter Strangers*.

While she continues in a State of Widowhood, she is their Mother still, and they are all of one Piece and Family; she is presum'd to intend nothing but their Advantage, and all she has is look'd

look'd upon as theirs: And therefore if she, through covetous Desire, or through Mistake, or Peevishness, will needs retain what does not properly belong to her, the Children, if it can consist with their Welfare by any Means, will be content to bear with so much Loss, or Disappointment, for the present, since it will certainly be theirs at last, rather than give their Parent an unnecessary Grief and Trouble, by going to Law. But when a new Affection, and a new Engagement intervene, then all the Prospect is disturb'd: They see new Interests rising, and the new Wife is supposed to make herself as acceptable as she can to her new Choice, by bearing with her all the Advantages of Fortune she can get together; and in such Cases does, too oft, forget her Children, and her former Love. In this Case the Children are much more at liberty to pursue their just Rights, than otherwise they would be; because, as I said, the Advantages of forbearing would not accrue so much to the Parent, as to an utter Stranger, to whom the Children have little or no Obligation.

And yet, in this Case, the Children must consider well, and take good care, that they be not overbias'd by this common Prejudice; That *second Marriages are always prejudicial to the Children's Rights and Interests*; for it is not always so, though it is too often: And therefore the Injury must be great and sure, as before, that will justify the Children in their contending with their Mother, though she has now forgot their Father's House and Family. But both in this, and all other Cases,

Cases, when the Reason is great and manifest, and the Occasion just and unavoidable, the Suit is to be manag'd with all the Care and Tenderness imaginable. Contests at Law are very seldom manag'd with ordinary and common Charity; they are full of Reproach, and full of Scandal: Few People think of any thing but vexing and afflicting their Adversaries; and therefore have their Eyes and Ears continually open to the Faults and Aspersions of their Enemies, glad to hear them represented ill, and willing to believe them so; as if they were themselves advantag'd by it. They are perpetually contriving and inventing how to lessen one another, and gain to themselves Credit, at the other's Expence: This makes the Law very hazardous, few People go out so innocent as they enter; they begin with Desire of Justice, and end with a Desire of Mischief: They begin with Calmness, and a tender Regard to their Adversary; but proceed with Anger, and increase to Malice, and end, too often, with impatient Longings for Revenge. Thus it is most commonly, when People, that are Strangers, or little known to each the other, go to Law together. One would hope that it should not be so with Friends and Relations; but that their natural Ties of Love should lay Restraint upon their Passions, and keep them in better Order. But 'tis rather all the contrary; they try at first, it may be, to moderate and keep themselves in good Temper; but they quickly fly out into Excess, recriminate, complain of, and reproach each other, with more Sharpness and Ill-will, than other People; and, know-

knowing more of each other, they are apt to proclaim more Secrets, and consequently meet with much more Credit and Belief, and consequently do each other much more Mischief. And 'tis still worse, the nearer these Relations are to each the other; when *Children* and their *Parents* strive, there is a world of Danger of ill Consequences.

It must needs be uneasy to the Parents, to be suspected of Injustice, and ill Design against their own Children, and to be charg'd in Publick of being so: And it must needs be uneasy to the Child, to think of striving with the Parent, and to believe the Parent ill-intentioned towards him: But this Contention does too frequently betray the Child into unkind, undutiful, and hard Expressions; and oftentimes the Parent to angry Curses, and fearful Imprecations, which both good Children, and good Parents, would by all means avoid. The Fear of Injury, and Hope of Victory, do so exasperate People's Minds, that 'tis the Sense of these ill Consequences makes the going to Law of Children with their Parents so affrightful: And makes it so much more eligible to endure a great Hardship, and considerable Injury, than seek for Remedy at Law, to the hazarding so much Mischief as does frequently ensue in such unkind Contentions. What Joy of Victory can be to either side, when *they* must be ashamed, confounded, and, it may be, much prejudic'd, whom we are tied, of all Folks living, to honour most, and do the best Service to.

But after all, let one be never so much inclin'd to favour, and secure the Rights and the Respects of

of Parents, as Nature, Reason, Decency, the Laws of God and Man require; yet when the Parents put off natural Affection, and have no regard to Honesty and Justice; but follow blindly and perversly their own Humour, and will not be advis'd by wise and sober, and impartial People, to do that Right to Children which both the Laws of God and Man require, and call for at their Hands; no one can reasonably condemn the Children that implore the Assistance of the Laws and Magistrates, to get themselves redress'd: Provided they do it by Necessity, with Tenderness, and all the Respect and Honour possible, never aggravating any thing done any farther than there is need to their own Vindication; of which they must not yet be over-tender, to the Disparagement and great Blame of their Parents: They ought to be exceeding careful to conceal the Faults and the Miscarriages of them. I do not see, but the same Piety would have endeavour'd to cover *Noah's Cruelty*, or *Injustice*, or *Perverseness*, had he been guilty of them, that was so careful to conceal his *Nakedness* and Folly, for they are also the Shame and Nakedness of the Understanding; and such Infirmities of the Mind no less dishonourable than those of the Body, which no one likes to discover in their Parents and Relations.

It remains, in the last place, that I consider the Promise and Encouragement annexed to the Performance of this Commandment: *Honour thy Father and Mother, that thy Days may be long in the Land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee.*

It is certain, that *the Land* here mention'd was *Canaan*; and therefore, that this Promise was particularly made to the Children of *Israel*. And it is also certain, that this Promise of *long Life* was also made to them upon the Fulfilling the *rest* of God's Commands, as well as this; the Book of *Deuteronomy* is full of this Promise: See, saith God, 30. 16. *I have set before thee this Day, Life and Good, Death and Evil: In that I command thee this Day to love the Lord thy God, to walk in his Ways, and to keep his Commandments, and his Judgments, and his Statutes, that thou mayst live and multiply; and the Lord thy God shall bless thee in the Land, whither thou goest to possess it.* So in 32. 47. *Set your Hearts unto all the Words which I testify among you this Day, which ye shall command your Children to observe to do all the Words of this Law: For it is not a vain thing for you, because it is your Life: And, through this thing, you shall prolong your Days in the Land whither ye go over Jordan to possess it:* And so in 4. 40. 5. 33. *Ye shall walk in all the Ways which the Lord your God hath commanded you, that ye may live, and that it may be well with you, and that you may prolong your Days in the Land which ye shall possess.* So in 6. 2. 11. 9. 25. 15. and other Places; and so long Life is promis'd to a King that governeth well, in *Deut.* 17. 20. and in 22. 7. *But thou shalt in any wise let the Dam go, and take the Young to thee, that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy Days.* And so, short Life is threatned to *Idolatry* in *Deut.* 4. 26. and 30. 18. From all which Places, it appears, that *long Life* is as well promised to the

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Performance of *other* Commands of God, as to this of honouring Parents : But it also appears, that by long Life is not strictly meant the living a great many Years, but the *living happily* and well : Long Life is accounted a Blessing, and therefore it is put to signify a Blessing in the Scriptures ; and in all these Places, it is as if God had said ; If you will live happily, and in my Love and Favour, in the Land to which you are now going, observe my Statutes, and keep my Commandments : That will secure to you all the Blessings you expect, and I have promised to you, in the Land of *Ca-naan* ; whilst you do so, you shall continue Masters of your Enemies, and live in Peace and Plenty. But if you fall from your Duty and Obedience, then I will give you over into the Hands of your Enemies, and you shall no longer live in, and enjoy this good Land, but be delivered over to Captivity : *I denounce unto you this Day, that ye shall surely perish, and that ye shall not prolong your Days upon the Land, whither thou passest over Jordan to go to possess it* : Deut. 30. 18. The Jews themselves understand it no otherwise than of being in general *blessed* ; and where God saw convenient, he blessed them with long Life in particular : For long Life is, of itself, no Blessing at all ; and short Life is generally no Evil, but a Deliverance from much Evil. And the short Life of Children is not so much a Punishment to *them*, as to their Parents ; and therefore for Children to be cut off, untimely, for their Disobedience to their Parents, were to afflict the miserable Parents doubly ; to cause them to lose their Children, and to lose them in Disobedience.

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Such Punishment would indeed be very proper for the Parent, by whose Want of careful, virtuous, and religious Education, the Child should become rebellious and disobedient ; for then he would bear the Punishment of his own Fault ; he would then smart for his Folly, or his Neglect ; and be afflicted, first, by a Disobedience, and then by an immature Death, its Consequence ; both which he might and ought to have prevented. But, truly, when a Parent has been very careful to educate his Children well, and yet shall find them disobedient and rebellious, and love them notwithstanding tenderly ; for such a Parent to lose these Children, would look like a Hardship, and none alive but would conclude the Parent were rather punish'd than the *Children* ; for tho' old Age may be a Blessing, when attended with other Blessings ; yet certainly for People to die young, can be no Punishment to them, because they feel no farther Misery ; Death puts an End to all their Sufferings.

And as for the Pleasures of this Life, from which they are cut off by Death ; they, who live to enjoy them, know the Dead have lost nothing ; for (besides, that it is no Pain to lose what they never had) the Pleasures of this Life are, at the best, but just enough to sweeten Life, and make it tolerable : Life were not worth the living without them ; but they, who live not, do not want them : And if it were not for the Comfort, and the Benefit of Relations, and the doing Good in the World, a short Life were a great Blessing. The Instance, that is commonly brought to prove

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the Heathens also were of the Mind, that short Life was a Punishment of disobedient Children, is that of *Simoisius* in *Homer*, who died very young, because he was disobedient, and would not support his Parents: But this Instance is much mistaken; for there *Simoisius* is lamented as one that died exceeding young, and lived not to make the Returns of good Children to their Parents, for all their Care and Tenderness bestowed upon him. He made not Returns answerable to his dear Parents; for he died very young, and was disabled by Death from doing what he would otherwise have done, if he had liv'd. It is a common Instance, and therefore I choose to disprove it, because the Heathens were not likely to make any such Judgment of the immature Deaths of disobedient Children, any otherwise than by reckoning immature Deaths among the Misfortunes that befel Mankind, and a Token of the Divine Displeasure; but, tho' due enough, yet no more due to that Crime than any other: And therefore, when St. *Paul* applies this Commandment, with this Promise of long Life, to the Christians, in *Eph. 6. 2, & 3.* he ought to be understood in general of *being blessed by God*, some way or other: *Honour thy Father and Mother, which is the first Commandment with Promise*; i. e. the first Commandment of the second Table, and hath a Promise annexed to it: Or the first Commandment with a special Promise, (for the second Commandment hath a Promise and a Threatning too, annexed to it, in the general) *that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the Earth.*

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His Design is certainly to encourage Children to honour and obey their Parents, and he repeats the Encouragement God gave the Children of *Israel*; but he could not repeat it wholly in the Sense they took it in, because Christians have nothing to do with *Canaan*: But it must have another Sense equivalent, and that is, *that it may be well with thee*, and thou mayest live happily, and in God's Favour, and he may bless thee with the Blessings thou shalt most stand in need of, and will be best for thee; and, if that be best for thee, *that thou mayest live long on the Earth*.

We cannot therefore conclude, from the Promise annexed to this Commandment, that long Life will *certainly* follow upon the Children's Obedience to their Parents: We must not understand that particular Blessing to be certainly and universally fix'd to good Children: Every Day's Experience may convince us of the contrary; for we see the most obedient, dutiful, and most respectful Children, carried off by hasty and untimely Ends, and such as gave the greatest Hopes imaginable. Neither yet may we conclude, that long Life is not sometimes bestowed upon obedient Children, for it sometimes may be; it is not fixed, but it is not, to be sure, excluded. Neither can we any ways conclude, that they, who arrive to old Age, have therefore been obedient Children; for that is not likely to be true; Experience is against it in too many Instances, *there is a Sinner of an hundred Years old*: And therefore, from these Uncertainties, there can be no concluding with any Safety.

The Encouragements that Children have from this Commandment, and its Promise, are, That if long Life be most convenient for them, all their Care and Circumstances considered, they may expect it ; but if it will not prove a Blessing (as truly of itself it never will) then is not God unfaithful in this Promise, if he take to himself, betimes, the best and most obedient Children ; for he only promis'd what would prove a Blessing, when he promis'd long Life ; and the *Righteous* are sometimes *taken away from the Evil to come* ; and then, to be sure, in Love and Kindness ; and therefore long Life is not always a Blessing, and therefore is not always promis'd, for God designs to bleſs obedient Children. He will hear the Prayers of their Parents ; he will confirm their Blessings : He will sometimes bleſs them by extraordinary Means and Methods ; and oftner by ordinary, by bleſsing their Care and Labour, promoting their Industry, giving them Favour in the sight of such as shall be able to do them Service : He will cause their dutiful and good Behaviour to their Parents, to stand them in good stead ; and recommend them to the good Opinion of others ; there being indeed nothing that generally makes more acceptable to all Sorts of People, than such obedient Carriage. Nothing becomes the Rich and Noble better ; nothing does sooner recommend the Poor and Mean to Favour and Employment, to Pity and Relief, than such Report of them, that they are good and helpful to their Parents in Distress. When the Son of *Syrach* exhorteſt to be helpful to Parents, he tells the Children,

dren, they shall find their Accounts in so doing : *My Son, help thy Father in his Age, and grieve him not as long as he liveth ; and if his Understanding fail, have Patience with him, and despise him not, when thou art in thy full Strength : For the relieving of thy Father shall not be forgotten ; and, instead of Sins, it shall be added to build thee up : In the Day of Affliction it shall be remembred ; 3. 12.* It will undoubtedly be remembred for Good, both by God and all good People. God will not only bless obedient Children here, but he will bless them with the Blessings of another Country, of which the Land of Canaan, with all its Beauty and Fertility, was but a poor and empty Shadow ; even with the Blessing of eternal Life in Heaven, where our short Span shall be prolong'd to everlasting Ages, and where it shall be well for ever with us ; where it will be our Pleasure and Reward to be perpetually loving, honouring, and obeying our eternal Parent, the great Creator and Preserver of us all : Whom let us all beseech, in the Words of the Church, *to have Mercy upon us, and to incline our Hearts to keep this Law.*

**D I S C O U R S E IV.**

EPHESIANS VI. VERSE 4.

*And ye Fathers provoke not your Children to Wrath;  
but bring them up in the Nurture and Admoni-  
tion of the Lord.*

**H**aving already treated of the Duty of Children to their Parents, and consider'd some of the most proper Cases, in that Relation: I am now to speak a little to the Advice that St. Paul here gives to Parents, how to behave themselves towards their Children. He had spoken to Children in the Verse before, *Children obey your Parents in the Lord, for this is right: Honour thy Father and Mother, that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the Earth:* And then he applies himself to Parents, *And ye Fathers, &c.*

I take it for a Rule, and granted, that there is no Relation in the World, either natural or civil, and agreed upon, but there is a reciprocal Duty obliging each Party. There is no such thing as one Man's requiring Love, Respect, Honour, Service or Obedience, from another, without being, at the same time, oblig'd to do him some good Turn for it, or for having already done it. God is not indeed a Debtor to any Man, but the Thing at the Bottom is the same: It is for our Creation, Preservation, for all the Blessings of this Life, and for the Promises and Hopes of a better, that we owe him, and are call'd upon to pay him,

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Honour and Service, Praise and Thanksgiving. Without *those*, he would have no Right to *these*; we need not fear to say so. We should not *praise* him, but for the Good we have receiv'd; nor *pray* to him, but for the Good we expect to receive *from* him. Now though he does not antecedently owe these Favours and Blessings to Mankind, yet it is necessary that he do them, before any Obligation can be laid on Mankind, to pay him Prayer or Praise, Honour, Service or Thanksgiving. There is therefore nothing more certain than this, that as all Duties and Relations are at first founded upon Benefits hoped for, or already receiv'd; so no one can require any Thing, as a Duty, at another's Hands, without having oblig'd him, or intending to oblige him, by something answerable to what he asks. And therefore, tho' the Parental Relation may seem, of all others, to be most at liberty; yet the Truth is this, that all the Right and Claim they have to the Love, Respect, the Service and Obedience of their Children, is founded on the Love they shew them, and the Good they do them, according to their Understanding and Ability: And therefore, if Parents, out of Cruelty or Wantonness, should expose their new-born Infants to the Rage of wild Beasts, or throw them into Rivers, and they should afterwards escape by good Providence, they might account those People for their Parents, if they would; and they might *pay* them, but they would not *owe* them, Love, or Honour, or Obedience: Their barbarous Usage cancell'd the Bond of Nature, and left them under no other Obligation to

their Parents, than to Strangers, No Body can assign a Reason why these Parents should require or expect any Duty at these Children's Hands: For, as for the *Being* they may be said to give them, they took it away as soon, and cruelly, as they could,

I only mention this, to make it very evident, that the Obligation of Children to love, honour, respect, and obey their Parents, is founded originally upon the Parents Love and Care of *them*; and to shew, that no one can require any thing from another as a Duty, to whom he does not also *owe* something by way of Duty. This is necessarily to be premis'd, not only when we are considering the Duty of Parents to their Children, but to be kept in mind, in considering the Duties of all Relations else, whether natural or civil; for, in all Relations, each Party is mutually, tho' differently, oblig'd to each the other. As therefore, Children are oblig'd to honour their Parents; so also are Parents oblig'd to look after, and take care of their Children. But because, in assigning several Reasons why Children are oblig'd to honour their Parents, in all the Senses of that Word, I found occasion to instance in most of the particular Cases, where Parents are oblig'd to shew their Love to, and to perform, indeed, their Duty to their Children; I am at liberty to consider the Words of the Text only, which contain but one Part of the Behaviour of Parents towards their Children: And that is, *Not to provoke their Children to Wrath, but to bring them up in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord.* We are therefore

fore to see, *in the first place*, what it is to provoke Children to Wrath ; and in *the second*, why Parents should not do so ; and, *lastly*, what is meant by bringing them up in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord.

*First*, What it is for Parents to provoke their Children to Wrath. To provoke any one to Wrath, is commonly understood, to irritate and stir them up to Anger ; whether the Provocation be just or needless, whether with Reason or without it. Now Parents are not here advis'd never to provoke their Children, or to stir them up to Anger ; for that may not be in their Power to prevent, and sometimes they will unavoidably do it, whilst they discharge their Duty to them. It is said of Adonijah the Son of David, that his Father had not displeased him at any time, in saying, *Why hast thou done so?* But this is no Example for other Parents, unless their Children so behave themselves as not to need Check or Reproof. Solomon was a great deal wiser than his Father ; and he advises Parents never to regard the Cries, the Pain, or Grief of their Children, under their Punishments, when there was just Occasion, or when they were in danger of Miscarriage. When Parents see their Children in hazard of falling into evil Courses, they are not to stand considering, whether what is proper to reclaim them, and prevent their Misery, will grieve or anger them, but to venture that, and do their Duty. They are to have regard to what they intend *should*, and what in likelihood will follow, and that is Amendment ; and not to how it will be taken at their

hands. They may herein look up to God the Father of us all, *who chastens us for our Profit, that we may be Partakers of his Holiness.* And yet he understands and knows, *that no chastening for the present seemeth joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable Fruit of Righteousness to them that are exercis'd thereby.* The Good of Children is what the Parent is to regard; and though the Method of procuring that may stir up all the dark and wrathful Spirits that the Children have, yet is it not to be declin'd on that Account; the reasonable Hopes of its yielding the Fruit of Goodness and Amendment, afterwards, to them who are exercis'd thereby, will justify what they do. Such a Restraint, Reproof, Admonition or Correction, as is in Reason and all Probability likely and proper to procure the Amendment of Children, though it will certainly provoke them to all the Anger and Impatience possible, is not here advis'd to be forborn by Parents, when they are bid *not to provoke their Children to Wrath.* The Scripture, which commands such Courses to be taken in many Places, does not, in any, advise them to be forborn: And therefore the just Exercise of the Parental Power is not restrain'd by any means, in these Words, for fear of making the Children a little uneasy.

But because there were some Parents in St. Paul's Time, as there are some in all Times, of a most hard, inhumane Temper; and others, who think they have, by Nature, Authority to say, and do, and use their Children, as they please, and thereupon are perfect Tyrants and Barbarians;

rians; and others, who think it always, and in all Cases, absolutely necessary to deal ruggedly and severely with their Children; because of these People, it neither was, nor is unnecessary to lay some such Command or Injunction in general on them, as this in the Text, *Fathers provoke not your Children to Wrath*: And then, the *provoking to Wrath*, signifies the provoking them by constant, hard, and evil Usage, to such a Degree of settled *Anger*, as will certainly end in *Hatred*.

The Parental Yoke is, naturally, of all others, the most light and easy: When God himself would express his Love and Tenderness to Mankind, he can do it no way, more feelingly, than by calling himself our *Father*, and letting us know he treats us as Parents do their Children: And when we would set out the Care and Tenderness of one Man to another, to the highest, we can go no farther than to say, *he us'd him as a Father would his Son*. And indeed, all Admonitions and Injunctions to Parents, to use their Children kindly, and with Gentleness, seem to be directed to a very small Part of Mankind: St. Paul spake these Words, *Fathers provoke not your Children to Wrath*, but to a very few. And, I believe, that we, who now and then use them on these Occasions, can apply them to very few also: No, the Bias of Nature is to the other way. But to those few, to whom they are applicable, it may be fit to say — Parents, shew not your selves too hard, austere, and rigorous to your Children: And that for these Reasons (which was the second

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Thing to be considered;) *First*, Because it is unnatural in itself; and, *Secondly*, because of the evil Consequences of such Usage.

*First*, Because it is unnatural in itself. It is not doing as other *People* do; nor, indeed, as most other *Creatures* do: It looks as if you did not belong to Mankind, not to feel the same Affections, and to shew the same Kindness, that other Parents do. 'Tis manifest, that your Children are not as happy as their Fellows are; they are prejudic'd by being descended from you, and do not partake of the common Lot of Kindness with other Children. And what Reason is there that they should be more miserable than others, if it lie in your Power to make them as easy? A Man is bound to be as good and kind to all the World, as he well can; and 'twere a weak thing, to think he has more Authority and Liberty to deal ill with his Children than with other People. For though a Man is allowed to do that with his Children, which he may not do to Strangers; yet that is upon Presumption always, that it will tend to the Children's Benefit, and for that Reason the Laws of God and Man have left the Children to the Parents, and will not punish them for doing that to *them*, which would be punished if done to *Strangers*: But neither of those Laws allow the Parents to do any thing, truly injurious to the Children; and Nature gives them no such Power: She only gives them Power to do them all the Good they can, and only allows them the Liberty of hurting them, and afflicting them for a time, in order to their Good. And therefore, where a Parent's

rent's Conscience tells him, that the Affliction he is laying upon his Child, is neither design'd, nor likely to do him any Good, it tells him he has no just Authority to do it; it tells him he is unnatural. And though no humane Laws must, or ought, indeed, to prevent or take Cognizance of such Severity (unless the Commonwealth be found to suffer by it) because they would thereby be in danger of hindring Parents of exercising a just Authority, on reasonable and necessary Occasions, over offending Children: Though the Laws, I say, must not take notice of these unnatural Severities; yet the Man cannot choose but know, that he is cruelly injurious all the while, and usurps a Power which does not naturally belong to him.

A Parent therefore must take care, that he mistake not the *Silence* of God's Word, nor the *Liberty* that Humane Laws must unavoidably leave to Parents in the Management of their Children, nor his own severe and rugged Temper; that he mistake not these for the Power and Authority that Nature gives him; for he may be unnatural to his Children, tho' God's Word prescribe him no Rule how far he may proceed, and tho' Humane Laws will allow what he does, and tho' his own Temper incline him naturally to cruel and inhumane Courses; a Parent may be unnatural for all these; and may be punish'd by our Common-Parent, for such unnatural and cruel Usage.

But *Secondly*, Parents are to be warn'd against too great and constant Severities, because of the evil Consequences of such Usage. *First*, it discourages

courages them strangely, and breaks their Spirits; they have no Heart to set about any thing; when they perceive that all they say, and all they do, is ill understood and ill taken, they have no List or Courage to go on. They find it is much the same, whether they endeavour to please, and do their Duty, or not; they still receive the same Treatment, and meet with the like unkind severe Usage. And therefore when St. Paul is giving the same Counsel to the *Colossians*, as here he does to the *Ephesians*, he subjoyns this as a Reason—*Fathers provoke not your Children to Anger, lest they be discourag'd, 3. 21.* lest the perpetual faulting, and reproving, and correcting them, reduce them to an utter Despair of pleasing them; and thereupon they sink, and become heartleſs, and faint in *Spirit*, under their Oppression. *Oppression will make a wise Man mad, as Solomon says;* and constant Misery and Painfulness of Mind will break a tender and ingenuous Heart, tho' the Sufferings of the Body be not very great.

There is naturally a Desire in all Inferiours, to render themselves acceptable to their Superiours; and this is visible in young People most especially, with regard to their Parents: But this Alacrity and vigorous Desire dies by degrees, when they perceive all their Endeavours to that purpose fruitless; it is the Hope of Succeeding, that is the Life and Spring of all Attempts; and when that fails, Desire it self languishes. When young People do all they can to win the Affections of their Parents, and find them still morose, and

and sharp, austere, untractable, and never to be moved; it is but natural to think, they should be tir'd, disconsolate, and faint, and give up all Endeavours for the future. This is one evil Consequence of a constantly severe and rugged Treatment of young People: But it seldom stops here; it produces very commonly a slavish and a disingenuous Fear of their Parents. They look upon them as their Tyrants, and dread them, as the Slaves do those that punish them; and, indeed, a severe and never-pleased Parent is no better than a little Tyrant, a constant Terror to his People. This puts the Children upon mean and disingenuous Shifts, to make their Peace, or to avoid his Sight; they are never easie, but at distance from him; and therefore fly him upon all Occasions. They can never please him with the Truth, and therefore try to do it with Lies and Tricks. But this kind of Fear is so near to *Hatred*, and does so naturally produce it, that I need not make them *two* Consequences of a constant ill Usage, for they are commonly but *one*. There is nothing more certain, than that those whom we constantly *fear*, we shall very easily learn to *hate*. Nothing but Love and Kindnes beget Love; and nothing is more likely to beget Hate, than to be constantly ill us'd, because that looks so like the natural Fruit of Hatred.

It is not difficult, even for young People, to discern a Difference betwixt a sudden, transient, accidental Anger, and a continual settled Disposition to Severity; they can make Allowance for Fits, though they return lightly and frequently:

ly: But when Anger becomes habitual, and Parents are not provok'd, but always ready to quarrel, and upbraid, and punish; then it is natural for the Children to despair of pleasing them, and to conclude they are the Objects of their Hatred and Aversion; and this will too, too naturally beget a Coldness and Neglect, mean Thoughts, evil Suspicions, Distrust, Disregard to their Commands, Contrivances to free themselves from them, and such Aversion as will quickly end in downright Hatred; for finding that *in* their Parents, and feeling that *from* them, which occasions them to hate *others*, it will be strange if it do not occasion them to hate *them*. When others use them ill, though they endeavour to deserve well *at* their hands, and take all Opportunities to shew their Anger, and Dislike of them, and never let them scape either Blame or Punishment, with or without Reason, and lead them a Life vexatious and afflicting, and will not be appeas'd by all that they can do, they easily conclude, that these People hate them, and have taken such prejudice against them, as nothing can remove: And since this is reasonable enough to conclude, in the case of any one besides Parents, what is it that forbids Children to make such a Conclusion of their Parents also, but a Presumption in Nature, that Parents cannot hate their Children? But this is not sufficient, if it were true at the bottom, as I doubt it is not; for if Parents could hate their Children, they could express their Hatred no otherwise than these People do; and till we can know Folks Hearts, we shall always

ways judge of their Affections, by the Expressions of Words and Actions: And therefore unless the Children are convinc'd (as they will in some time be, for they have Reason and Understanding, and know when they do amiss, and when they are truly blameable) unless they are convinced that the Severities they undergo are design'd for their Good and Amendment, and have a Tendency thereto, it will signify nothing to tell them, that they are not hated by their Parents, for it is all one by what name you call it, or by what title you distinguish it; a constant rugged and austere Usage, and an implacable Severity will always go for Hatred with them who feel the burthen of it.

And though Children (by which I understand those of Years and Discretion, but under the Tutelage of their Parents) though Children, I say, will be the last, in whom this ill Usage begets Hatred, yet it will surely enough beget it in them at last; and that is a fearful Consequence of provoking Children to Wrath, both to the Parents, and the Children. A Man can hardly be easie under the known Ill-will of any Relation, or one he has much to do withal; but this Un-easiness grows up to Pain and great Trouble, when the Relation is very near: It is impossible for either Parents to hate their Children, or Children their Parents, or to think they are hated by each the other, without great Grief and Trouble; it sits so hard upon their Minds, that they are never quiet under it: If they are otherwise never so happy, yet the Remembrance of this Enmity

mity interrupts their Content, and spoils all ; *All this availeth me nothing*, saith Haman to his Wife, recounting his Felicities, *whilst I see Mordicai the Jew sitting at the Gate*. It is not what we have that makes us happy, if we think we want something besides ; that, which a restless Envy, and unmeasurable Ambition spake by him, is spoken inwardly by Love or Grief, when near Relations quarrel with each other ; all things besides afford no settled Peace or Pleasure, whilst that great Breach continues.

Even where the Mind of one Party (and that the injur'd and offended one) is satisfied with the Reasonableness and Justice of his being at variance, and sees the Necessity there is of continuing his Displeasure, and that great Mischiefs would arise from a Compliance and Reconciliation (and such Cases may very well happen, and that between Parents and Children) yet is not the Mind at perfect quiet for all this ; the Voice of Nature is louder than that of Reason, and strict Justice, and beats importunately at the Heart ; and there will be no lasting Rest, till all is over, and a thorough Reconciliation bring back each Party to their natural Affections, and place them in the state they were at first, and always should be.

This sore and uneasy Condition the Mind is in, during a state of Enmity, should be one Motive to the keeping and preserving Love and Friendship betwixt Relations ; and since the Hearts of Parents do so naturally incline to Children, and *Love*, they say, *descends*, it ought to move them to the greater Care, not to irritate

them

them too far by a cruel Usage; that they put it not past the power of Reconciliation; for when Hatred is once taken up, and begins to fix and settle in People's Minds, it is very hard to root it out again. One may sooner be convinc'd, that our Aversion to a Person is not so reasonable and well grounded as it should be, and that we carry our Resentments too far: One may sooner be convinc'd of this, than we can lay them down, and amend; we cannot get out of our Mistakes so soon, as we fell into them, nor so easily get free from bad Practice. When we have done, and persisted some while in doing, what we are afterwards convinc'd we had better have let alone, we are not yet at liberty; there are more things concur to keep us in a way we are once engaged in, than at first to bring us to it. And therefore it is not good to provoke any one too far, and carry matters to Extremity; it makes it so much the harder to soften them again, and bring them to good Temper, and place them where you found them, though they may see the Reasons of coming back, and have a secret Desire of doing so: And, of all Enmities and Feuds, the fiercest and the most implacable are those of near Relations.

These are some of the evil Consequences of Parents *provoking their Children to Wrath*, that is, of using them so ill, unkindly and severely, as to make them lose all Patience, and fly out into Fury and Disorder, to loose the Bands of Duty and Submission, to become Refractory, hardened in Contumacy and Rebellion: The Experience Peo-

ple have themselves, and the Observations they may make from others, may furnish them with other Arguments to this purpose. I have the less Care and Concern to look after other Reasons; because it is very probable, that the Case is rare, and seldom happens; there being, in all likelihood, throughout the Christian World, twenty too fond and tender Parents, to one austere and over-rigorous one: And as many, in the like proportion, rather undone by Softness and Indulgence, than miscarry by Severity. *One need not look for Arguments, or fear the want of them, where Nature is on our side;* but because St. Paul supposes some, and all Ages supply us with some Instances of brutal and unnatural People, after they have heard the Reasons why Parents should not deal so over-rigorously with their Children, it is fit they should hear what St. Paul advises, and how he would have them deal with them, and that is, *to bring them up in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord;* which is the last Thing to be considered.

*To bring Children up in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord,* is, according to the Letter, to bring them up in the Christian Religion, to teach them their Duty, to learn them what they are to Believe, and what to Practise; to instruct them in the Knowledge of God, and Jesus Christ; to shew them in what Condition they are by Nature, and to what they are advanc'd by Grace; to how much Misery their being descended from so corrupt an Original had reduc'd them, and how their actual Sins endangered them yet farther,

ther, by exposing them to God's Wrath, and everlasting Death; and what Deliverance from them all was wrought by Christ our Lord, with all the rest of the Particulars of that most merciful mysterious Dispensation. All this is naturally comprehended under *the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord*; and no doubt but Parents are here advis'd to bring their Children up in the Knowledge and Practice of the Christian Religion: And it is the greatest Testimony of their Love, that they can shew them, in so doing; the greatest Kindness they can do them, the greatest Blessing, and the best Inheritance they can bestow upon them. Without this, it is a little thing to say, that neither Wisdom, Riches, Honours, nor any thing besides, can make them happy; for without this, they will, with all the rest, be miserable.

Taking therefore the *bringing Children up in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord*, for the breeding them up in the Knowledge of Christ and his Religion, the Connexion may be this. Would you, Parents, have your Children honour you, and behave themselves obediently, and as becomes them in all respects, bring them up in the Fear and Nurture of the Lord; teach them the Christian Law; let them read and be conversant in the Holy Scriptures; make them apply themselves early to that; there they will see their Duty; there they will find such Lessons of Instruction, such great Encouragements and Promises of huge Rewards, as will secure their Honour and Respect, their Service and Obedience to their Parents. A better Sense cannot be

found to fit these Words; but because *the Nurture and the Admonition of the Lord* seems to be set in opposition to *the provoking to Wrath*; and because the Words will better bear it, and that a good Religious Education in the Christian Doctrine does not sufficiently answer to *provoking Children to Wrath*, it may be somewhat more pertinent and proper to understand, by *Nurture and Admonition of the Lord*, such a Religious Admonition, and Reproof, and Castigation of Children, as is agreeable to the Doctrine, and good Spirit of Christ the Lord; because this Sense will also take in the other, and make the Opposition perfect. Would you, who are Parents, be honour'd and obey'd by your Children, take the Courses that are properst for that purpose: Do not think of bringing your Designs to pass, by being hard, morose, and always out of humour with them; by treating them inhumanly and cruelly; by discouraging them continually with Frowns and ill Looks, with Tauntings and Upbraiding, with Threats, and cruel Chastisements: They will not need so great Severities; such slavish Usage, such daily Menaces of disinheriting and casting off, and such like rugged and illiberal Treatment as is sometimes shewn them: These things do often but inflame them, and exasperate them to greater Contumacy, extinguish by degrees their natural Piety and Affections, make them avoid your Sight, fly from you, as from Mischief; to dread you like an Executioner, shake off the Yoak, as soon as possibly they can, and if not hate, yet never love you more.

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They will be won with better Arguments than these; you may secure their Honour and Obedience better, by more natural and gentle Methods; give them such good Instructions as you find in Holy Scriptures; remember them of God's Commands, to Honour and Obey their Parents; admonish them, from thence, with the Spirit of Meekness, to take good heed to their Ways, how they transgress the Laws of God, by disobeying *their* Commands, when just and reasonable; and how they shall, one day, be put to answer for the neglectful or contemptuous Breach of them.

Lay but, at first, this good Religious Foundation in their Minds, and you may build upon it for ever after; it will hold when all Things else fail, and it will forward all Considerations besides; it will give strength to every Argument: This will be the readiest way to convince young People you design their Good in all Injunctions and Commands; they will see that their Parents urge no more than God commands; and have no other Interest to pursue, than *their* Happiness. The Reception of any Argument, the Power that either Advice or Command shall obtain, depends, in a great Measure, upon the way and manner of propounding it: If you have once convinc'd the Party, that you design his Benefit, you have already gain'd a favourable Attention; and every thing you say shall be considered: But if you give him cause to suspect your Kindness, he will neglect, or coldly entertain all you shall offer. When young ones are convinc'd of the

true Love and Kindness of their Parents, (and it is very easy to convince them by gentle Usage) they will bear with Decency and Patience a great many hard uneasy Things; Reproof, and Admonition, nay, and Punishments, will find Submission, and Obedience, when they can come to think, it is in order to their Good, or at least design'd for that purpose. It is not to be thought, that any manner of Restraint, or Punishment, should be, for the present, easy or well taken; a Parent is not to look for this, nor to have any great regard to it; but he is so to order them, that, upon Consideration and Reflection, they may find, that all was well intended towards them, that all their Admonitions and Reproofs, Restraints and Punishments, were natural and moderate; such as were proper for their Age, Condition, and Offence; such as were likely to effect Amendment, and prevent or cure an Evil; such as other Parents wise and tender might make use of, on the like Occasions; such as Religion would advise and justify. Such Nurture and Admonition, such Instruction and Reproof, and Chastisement as this, would look as if it came from the Lord; who never grieves us willingly, or for his Pleasure, but for Necessity, for our Amendment, and our lasting Good; and such as this would secure the Honour and Respect, the Service and Obedience of Children to their Parents.

I have before observ'd, that when we dis-  
course of this Matter, we speak but to a few,  
who are nearly concern'd: Small is the number  
of cruel and unnatural Parents, and therefore  
few

few are the Children who suffer at their Hands; and therefore it will not be reasonable, that many should apply what has been said too closely to themselves, or think it their own Case, whether Parents or Children: The Children are not to think the Parents cruel or unnatural, because they have been constantly reprov'd for their evil Words or Practice; and closely restrain'd from doing any thing hurtful to themselves or others, or sharply punish'd for haying done it; for these are all of them Duties to Parents, and cannot therefore be their Faults. And besides, it may very well happen, that Parents may be angry soon, and retain it long, with great Reason and Justice, when the Children think otherwise; because *they* understand things better, see the natural Tendency of many of their Actions and Humours, and the Consequences they may draw after them, and the Hazards and sinful Courses they may engage them in; and a world of things besides, which Ignorance, and Thoughtlessness, and Inexperience, keep the Children from considering. And they are too much concern'd in their own behalf, to pass a true impartial Judgment on the Severities they undergo; too apt to justify their own Conduct, and to conclude themselves if not entirely Innocent, yet not deserving such Reproof or Punishment. And after all that can be said, it were much better for the World, and more reasonable, all things considered, that more Children should suffer from the Rigours of their Parents, than do, (or ever will do) than that Parents, out of Fear of

offending on this side, should be restrain'd from using such Severities, as they (who know their Children's Humours and Inclinations best) shall think convenient, and most proper; or that Children should dispute, contest and quarrel their Right, or should withdraw themselves from their Obedience, upon any such pretence: Of the two Evils, this, beyond Comparison, would be the greater; and therefore, however hard and heavy the Dominion of some Parents may be, I know no Remedy or Way to ease the Children, whilst they continue under them, but a Submissive, Meek, and Dutifull Deportment towards them: Patience, and quiet undergoing what is laid upon them, will soonest bring the Parents to Consideration and Reason, and mollifie and break their Fury, and sometimes their Hearts; when a perverse and contumacious Obstinacy will but exasperate to greater Anger and Severity: And Time at length will either vanquish their Austerity, or set the Children at their Liberty; so that they have not long, or much to suffer. And therefore tho' the Text is, *Fathers provoke not your Children to Wrath*; yet I will make an end with the Command foregoing, *Children obey your Parents in the Lord, for this is right.*

D I S C O U R S E V.

I T I M O T H Y V. V E R S E 8.

*But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own House, he hath denied the Faith, and is worse than an Infidel.*

**A**MONGST other Duties incumbent upon Parents, that of making Provision for their temporal Livelihood is certainly one; and here commended and injoin'd by St. Paul, in Words of great weight and moment: *If any provide not, &c.* In speaking to which, I intend to consider, in the *first place*, the Terms here us'd; and, *in the second*, say something to the different Proportions of Provision for Children; because *to provide*, is an indefinite Phrase, and must be determin'd by several Considerations and Respects: And, *thirdly*, consider the Case of disinheriting Children, for whom Parents are so oblig'd to make Provision, as far as it relates to us, and becomes a Case of Conscience.

*First*, Of the Terms here us'd: *To provide*, is to take care of, and make provision for the Maintenance, the Livelihood, and Subsistence, proper to the Age, Condition and Quality of any one. *To provide for our own*, is to provide for such as have any Relation to, and Dependance on us; such as are more ours than any other's: And *to provide especially for those of our own House*, is to provide for our Kindred and Family, and those who are nearly related to us, and, in this particular Place,

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90 *Duty of Parents to Children.*

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Place, especially our Children. *To deny the Faith*, was accounted the greatest Sin a Christian could commit: *Apostacy* was thought to be much more heinous than *Infidelity*; as a *Renegade* is much more odious than an open Adversary, made so by *Accident*, and not by *Choice*: And therefore, *to deny the Faith*, is a Phrase of great Exaggeration, and signifies the being as bad a Man, and the doing as bad things as possibly he can; though he do not actually *deny the Faith*, nor become truly *an Infidel*. For 'tis certain, that a Parent may be very negligent and careless of, and very cruel to his Children, without renouncing to his Belief of the Christian Doctrine; the Meaning therefore of *denying the Faith*, is the acting in Contradiction to it, the neglecting or despising its Commands.

They, who profess themselves *Christians*, own and acknowledge Jesus Christ to be their King and Lawgiver; they have given up their Names to him in *Baptism*; they are to do as he enjoyns them; they are to guide and govern themselves by his Directions, to do whatever he commands, and to leave undone whatever he forbids. This all Christians are oblig'd to, by vertue of their *Baptism*; and they profess themselves oblig'd to do it, by owning themselves to be Christians; And therefore, when they practise in opposition to *this Faith*, they are said *to deny it*, and to become *Infidels*, although they do not formally and solemnly deny their Christianity. It is as *St. Paul* expresses, *Tit. 1. 16.* *They profess that they know God, but in Works they deny him, being abominable and disobedient, and to every good Work reprobate,*

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or void of Judgment: And the doing thus, is therefore said to be *worse than being Infidel*, and doing the like, because the Unbelievers have not the same Light, Knowledge, and Understanding of these Duties that Christians have; nor is the Performance of them enjoyn'd, under so great and weighty Penalties, nor with so great Encouragements to Infidels, as to the Christians in the Gospel.

The Meaning therefore of the Words of the Text, as applied to Parents in particular, is this: If any Parent, who professes and calls himself a Christian, neglects or refuses to make a due and fitting Provision for his own Children, according to his Understanding and Abilities, he is really a bad Man; he does in effect deny the Faith; he lets it have no Power over him; he withdraws himself from the Obedience he owes, and ought to pay, to Christs Command's, which enjoyn all Parents to provide for their Children; and he is so much worse than an Infidel, by how much he is more obliged to make such Provision for his Children, than Unbelievers are, who have not the same Commands and Laws, the same Encouragements, nor are tied by the same Penalties that Christians are.

From the Terms of the Text thus explain'd, it may not be amiss, before I go on to the other Heads, to observe these two Things; *First*, that the Faith of Christ does always include Obedience to the Laws of Christ. *Secondly*, that all natural Duties are tied most strongly upon Christians, by the Faith of Christ, *i. e.* by their professing

fessing Christianity. *First*, that *the Faith of Christ* does certainly include Obedience to the Laws of Christ: For if People are said to *deny the Faith*, by acting in opposition to it, by not performing its Injunctions and Commands, and *to keep*, and *hold fast the Faith* by living up to its Rules, and conforming to its Precepts, it is plain, that barely believing the Gospel, is not the Faith that will stand us in any stead of it self; and yet 'tis certain, that disowning externally the Belief and Profession of Christianity, is *denying the Faith*, though Men should live in the Practice and Obedience of most of Christ's Commands. It was not only possible, but practis'd often, in the primitive Ages of Christianity, for Men to deny themselves to be Christians in publick, and before the Magistrates, to save themselves from Starving, Banishment, or Prisons, or Death with Torments; yet, underhand, both thought themselves to be Christians, and lived as Christians: But this was a huge Mistake, and guarded frequently against by our Saviour himself; who tells his Disciples, that *they who denied him before Men*, (whatever they might think of themselves, and know of their Adherence to his Laws in Heart and Practice) *should be denied by him before his Father in Heaven with all his holy Angels*; and gives them in charge to confess him openly, when they were call'd upon to do it: And St. Paul assures us, that *with the Mouth, Confession* (that Jesus is the Son of God) *is made unto Salvation*. Now it matter'd not, what these People thought *with themselves*, nor how innocently and virtuously

tuously they might otherwise live ; they did, by this verbally disowning themselves Christians, and disclaiming that Profession, they did, to all intents and purposes, *deny the Faith*, and renounce to Christianity. The Scandal and Offence they gave to the Christians was exceeding great, and mischievous ; the Scorn, and Triumph, they afforded to the Jews and Heathens ; the Impediments and Stops they put in the way of Converts, and doubting People, were all great, and occasioned as much Mischief and Dishonour to the Christian Name, as if they had at the same time renounced to all their virtuous and religious Practice. And since whoever embrac'd Christianity, engaged to prefer the being *called a Christian*, and the professing that Belief, to all the Good or Evil this World could afford, to all the Profit, Pleasure and Advantage he might any ways reap, and to all the Pain and Misery he might any ways undergo ; since the undertaking Christianity implies all this, since this is truly *the Doctrine of the Cross*, that all Christians make Profession of in Baptism ; 'tis evident, that he who, to save himself from either Shame or Pain, denies himself, in Word, to be a Christian, *denies the Faith*, and renounces to Christianity, in a most large important Article, and shall have no Advantage from Christ's Promises, although he live a good and virtuous Life in other Respects. Now though this alone, and, of it self, is more than enough to hazard a Man's Salvation ; yet is not the bare Profession of Christianity, no nor the Belief of all its Articles, enough to secure a Man from denying the Faith ;

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because it is evident he may deny it in Works, though he believe in his Heart, and confess with his Mouth, that Jesus is the Son of God: And the Reason of that is this, that every Christian is oblig'd, by vertue of his Profession, not only to believe with the Heart, and make Confession with the Mouth of the Faith of Christ, but to evidence this Faith in all his Actions, to shew it in his Life and Conversation; and that all these Things are absolutely necessary, and altogether make the Faith of a good Christian: And therefore, that neither the one, nor the other (but all together) will serve a Man's turn, or stand him in any stead. In a word, if a Man can be properly said to *deny the Faith*, by neglecting and refusing to do his Duty; 'tis evident that Faith includes Obedience to the Laws of Christ, and is, without those Works, both vain and dead.

The *second* Thing to be observ'd is this; that all our Natural and our Civil Duties are strongly tied upon us, by vertue of our Profession of Christianity. It is very much to the Honour of our Religion, that it is wholly taken up in providing for the Security and Benefit of Mankind, even in this World; its general Bent and Tendency is to set Men at ease, and make them happy; its great Endeavour is to secure the Duties of all Relations to each the other, from want of which proceed all the Mischiefs in the World. It does not leave Men to be mov'd by such Considerations alone as Natural Reason will suggest; but furnishes them with better, and lays the powerful Commands of God upon them, with the Sanction

ction of great and fearful Penalties to such as disobey, and with the great Encouragements of endless Happiness to Men's Obedience. Now nothing can be more to the Advantage of any Man, than that all the People with whom he has to deal, to whom he has any Relation, or upon whom he has any Dependance, should be commanded by God above, to shew him Mercy; and to do him Justice; to do him all good Offices; and to suffer none to do him Injury; and should be encourag'd to all this, by Promises of the greatest Blessings, and threatned, upon neglect, with the most fearful and amazing Evils: Nothing is more likely to secure a Man's Peace and Happiness, than such a Fence as this; and yet this is the Fence that Christianity provides for every single Person in the World, by laying its Commands, extending its Promises and Threats to every single Christian, to oblige them to perform their several Duties to their several Relations throughout the World. This ought to recommend the Christian Religion to all considering People, above all other Laws and Dispensations whatsoever; for tho' indeed it must be own'd, that natural and civil Duties fare no better, or at least not very much, under Christianity, notwithstanding all this Care, than under *Judaism*, or *Mahometism*, or *Paganism*; yet this is not for want of any thing in Christianity, but of good Sense and Consideration in Mankind. The Religion is not any where defective, but its Professors; that is still excellent and most divine, but we are sottish, wicked, and worse than Infidels. It will, one day, be more tolerable

ble for Heathens, Jews, and Turks, than unbelieveing disobedient Christians. There is no Religion in the World was ever framed to make Men happy, even in this Life, like that of Jesus Christ, if it were thoroughly pursued: A Man cannot possibly be made uneasie, or miserable, or suffer any Evil at another's hands, without the Violation of some Christian Command; which, if obeyed, would have secur'd him.

Having therefore premis'd these Things; which shew sufficiently the great Obligation Christian Parents lie under, to make Provision for their Children, it is time to come to be more particular, and to see what sort of Provision they *are to make*; which was the *second* Thing to be considered.

To determine with any manner of Exactness, or to any Use and Purpose, the Proportion of Provision Parents are to make for Children, it will be necessary to have consideration and respect to their Age, Condition, and Capacity. Respect must needs be had to their *Age*, because there is a time when Children are so helpless, that all they want, and can enjoy, must be provided for them, and it can lie on no body so well as Parents to do it: And in this Case, *Provision* includes every thing that Children stand in need of; this Nature teaches, and I need not farther insist on it. As they grow up in Years, their Quality and Condition, their Capacity and Abilities both of Body and Mind, are to come into consideration; and they must be more and more intur'd to Labour, Diligence, and Industry. It is not to be

be thought, that Parents are oblig'd only to provide for their Children, Money, Lands, and Houses, and then have done their Duty; but they must provide them with Abilities of Body and Mind, both to obtain, preserve, and use the Benefits they intend to bestow upon them: They must accustom them, whilst young, to Application and Attention to Busines: These Things are necessary both to Poor and Rich; and, without them, the Poor will never be rich, and the Rich will be quickly poor. It is certain, that the Poor can never discharge the Duty of Parents well to their Children, without inuring them to Labour and Hardship; that is the Provision they are only capable of making for them, and *that* they are oblig'd to *make*. God gives their Children Health and Strength, and *they* must see them well employ'd and us'd; *that* is the Portion God enables them to give them; and the sooner they begin with them, and the closer they pursue them to Labour, Diligence, and Industry, the kinder they will be to them, the better they will provide for them. 'Tis certain that the poorest Parents in the World are oblig'd to provide for their Children, according to the best of their Abilities; and as certain, that they can provide for them no otherwise, than by accustoming them to Labour, and Industry; and therefore 'tis certain, that they are oblig'd to provide thus for them.

It looks, at first, like doing them no harm, to let them continue lazy, idle, and doing nothing; and many poor People are extremely guilty of this way of Education, imagining it a piece of

Kindness to their Children, to let them rather beg their Bread, than put them to labour for it; a Mistake not only mischievous to the Commonwealth, but of most pernicious Consequence to their Children, the unkindest thing that they can do to them; for though it please them for the present, yet it entails on them perpetual Misery, and very often untimely Death, by engaging them in wicked Courses, the sure and ready Road to Ruine; whereas the bringing them up to Labour, and continual Business of some kind or other, keeps them, at least, in a mean Sufficiency, if not in Plenty, and puts them into a Capacity of emerging out of their Difficulties, and bettering their Condition. So that I do not see, but that poor People do really offend God, as well as injure their Children, by keeping them idle, by not inuring them most constantly to such Labours as God enables them to bear. We know that God ties them to do what they can for their Children, and they are capable of doing nothing but this for them; and therefore God hath tied them to this; and if they will not do this for their Children, St. Paul will tell them, *they deny the Faith, and are worse than Infidels.*

As for the richer and the better sort of People, their Quality and Condition is also to be considered in determining what kind of Provision is to be made for their Children. Custom and the Usages of the Country make many things decent and fit, which otherwise would be indifferent; and Distinction of Quality and Condition is absolutely necessary to the keeping up Quiet and Order in the

World:

World: It is impossible for Mankind to live in Peace, without a due Subordination of one Condition to another: And therefore, though these Things, considered by themselves, appear neither Moral nor Religious, but Matters of Ceremony, Decency and Form; yet who so sets himself to consider Things throughly, will find, that these Things, in Conjunction one with another, are so absolutely necessary to the securing Peace and Order; that, without them, neither Religion nor Morality could live and flourish in the World: And therefore they, who think meanly of these Things, and that Mankind is above them, are, it may be, mistaken in Mankind, and understand not Humane Nature enough; and they, who endeavour to subvert and overturn them, are not aware of the Evils that would ensue. It can't be told, in what Rank of Virtues, Decency, and Honour, and Distinction of Quality and Condition stand; but yet it is easy to see, that, without these Things, there would be nothing but Confusion and Disorder in the World. It is therefore possible for one Man to do that, by reason of his Quality and Condition, with Reason and Innocence, which another cannot do, by reason of *his* Condition, without Offence and Blame. 'Tis possible for a Man of good Quality to make such Provision for his Children, as may be truly faulty, which if a meaner Man had made, he had done well and laudably. And therefore, till Men find a better Rule to walk by, in these Cases, than Decency, and Custom, and good Fame, they will

not do either well or wisely to neglect and overlook them, though I can't assign them the particular Command of God which they offend against in such Neglect.

Upon these Accounts, it may be utterly impossible for any one else to prescribe to a Parent a Rule of Provision for his Children, either as to Kind, or Quantity; but it will not be difficult for him himself to do it, taking these Things into Consideration. Only let him not be unmindful of these two Things. *First*, that he never educate his Children above the Provision he designs to make for them: And, *Secondly*, that whatever Provision he designs to make for them, he inure them to Labour, Diligence, and Industry, to Attention, and Application, as they are capable of bearing. This is common to all Qualities and Conditions; this must go along with all Children; the poorest are not too mean for these Qualities, nor the richest above them.

*First*, A Parent is to take good heed that he never educate his Children above the Provision he designs to make for them; as well because it will slacken their Diligence and Industry, upon Presumption there will not be so great Occasion for them, as also that the Disappointment will be great and troublesome, without any manner of Advantage; it being much more easy to bear with a mean Condition constantly, than to fall into it from a plentiful and good one; which is the Case of People better educated than provided for: The soft and tender Usage of People, whilst young, and capable of undergoing Labour and more

Hard-

Hardship, is truly a Diskindness to them, without an answerable Provision for them afterwards; for whenever they are left to shift for themselves, they are no better than expos'd naked, as it were, and defenceless, unable to procure themselves a Livelihood, and in much worse Condition than their Inferiours. This is the Misfortune frequently, of being born of an ancient and genteel Family, or of Parents presum'd to be much richer than they truly are: Their Name, and Quality, and Reputation, entail upon them Misery and Want; they must be bred as if they were all to inherit great Estates, when they are to inherit nothing but a Name, that does them Mischief: This is not design'd a Kindness to the Children, but generally proceeds from Pride and Vanity; which make the Children mean and miserable indeed, for fear the Parents should be thought so: 'Tis one of the unkindest Things a Parent can do to breed his Children up in Delicacy, and Softness, whilst they are young and strong, and then to leave them to themselves to work their Fortune out of Weakness and Folly: 'Tis very ill for the richest Parents that are, to deal too tenderly with their Children, let them leaye them as well provided as they can; but 'tis great Cruelty in Parents, that are able to leave them little or nothing, to leave them Pride and Laziness, and an Incapacity both of Body and Mind to do themselves any Service; as if the Reproach and Blame, that must unavoidably fall on these unkind Parents, were not more to be respected and feared, than the Reputation of having a small Estate, and be-

ing unable to leave them a considerable Fortune. This is apparently preferring their own *Fame* to the true and lasting *Benefit* of their Children, in a material Point, which is a very ill way of providing for them.

And these People, of appearing Fashion and Quality (though to be pitied more) are as much to be blamed, as the poorer sort, who will not inure their Children to Labour and close Application; for their Inability to provide for them, according to their Quality and Condition, will not excuse them for neglecting to do *as* they are *able*. The Effects of this unadvis'd way of Education are so remarkably bad, that 'tis a wonder Men should need any caution against it: The Men-children either fall into the Meanness of Servitude, the Refuge of the idle and uninstructed part of Mankind, or betake themselves, in despair, to the Wars abroad, or to Robberies at home: The Women fall too often into the Hands of wicked Tempters, through want of Ability to employ themselves in honest Courses, and an utter Incapacity of maintaining their Condition; their Poverty making them unfit for their *Equals*, and their soft expensive Education making their *Infierours* afraid to match with them, besides the hazard of bringing *the Spirit of a good Family* along with them.

These are some of the usual Mischiefs of a Parent's educating his Children much above the Provision he is able, or willing, to make for them, and leave them; sufficient to discourage any one from doing it, considering how much easier 'tis

'tis to advance and rise above our Hopes, than to fall from our Expectations; and how much kinder it is, to leave our Children Satisfaction and Content, if not Surprize and Pleasure, than Grief and Shame upon their Disappointment.

There is also the opposite Extream that is not to be forgotten; and that is, a mean and sordid Education, when they design to leave, or cannot help the leaving them, a great Fortune. I am not directly to charge this Humour with a Sin; but 'tis a huge Indecency, and piece of Indiscretion; a Thing that has often had very ill Consequences, and cannot easily have good; for the young People, either seeing good reason to hope, or finding for certain, that they shall one day succeed to a Fortune superiour to the Condition they are educated in, do either begin to despise, or to neglect their Busines: They think themselves above their Calling, or imagine they shall stand in little need of its Assistance; and, upon either account, slacken their Care and Industry, withdraw their Minds from their proper Concerns, and become very quickly bad Servants; and, as soon as they come to Liberty and their Estate, fall into all Extravagance, and make a very ill Use of both. In a word, a mean and sordid Education, with the Prospect of a plentiful Condition to follow, will hardly escape one of these two Extreams; either by use contract a mean and sordid Spirit, and, in the midst of Plenty, live a wretched and penurious Life, so that a mean Estate had been sufficient and most proper; or else there will so much time be lost in

the way they are in, and they will shake off their Condition, and betake themselves to loose and profuse Courses, and be undone by too great Plenty.

A prudent Parent will therefore carefully avoid both these Extreams, of educating his Children much *above*, or much *below* the Provision he designs to make for them; and that this may not seem to be out of the way, it is, if well consider'd, the surest means of rendring the Provision they make, most serviceable and useful to their Children: For, by these means, the Children have Encouragement to prosecute their Busnells with Industry and Application, knowing their Parents will take care to farther them, and help them according to their Beginnings; and that such Help and Assistance, of it self, will not suffice, without their own great Care and Industry, which will also be a Spur on that side. They must not be wanting to themselves, no more than their Parents will be; and then their Affairs are likely to succeed: For, if they either perceive their Parents unable to go through as they begun, they are discourag'd, griev'd and sham'd, and thereupon grow desperately careless; or able to do above what their present Condition requires, they grow, as was before observ'd, intollerably negligent, weary of their way, and longing after Liberty; which, being unseasonably obtain'd, is commonly us'd intemperately.

This is therefore one Thing that Parents will observe in making Provision for their Children, to fit them with an Education suitable to it; to keep

keep a mean, without either over or under-doing the matter ; for since they are oblig'd in Duty to make Provision for them, they ought in Reason and Prudence to take all care they can to render such Provision the most serviceable and useful to them.

The other Thing, a Parent should not be unmindful of, is this ; that whatever great Provision he intends to make for his Children, he do by all means inure them to Diligence and Industry, to Application and Attention of Mind : These Qualities may chance to make some amends for the defect of Money or Estate, but no Provision will sufficiently supply the defect of *them* : Many emerge, by these, out of great Difficulties and Straits, and make their way to Plenty and Prosperity ; and many more, for want of these, decline from Plenty to much Misery ; so that no Fortune is above, or can continue well without them. There can be no better Reason assign'd, why so many People of Fashion are distinguish'd as much by their Vices, as their Birth and Quality, from their Inferiours, than that they are so softly educated, and fall into the worst of Hands, *i. e.* their own, so soon : There is a great deal of Care, and Time, and Money, oft expended on them ; but it does not succeed so well with them, because they must not be press'd to any thing ; they must take what they will, and never be constrain'd to any thing laborious and difficult. A close Attention and Application would break their Spirits quickly, and they would never love their Business again. This is the Opinion of fond and

and ignorant People together, and quickly agreed to by the young ones, who are always afraid of being overcharg'd, as well as their Parents, and think their Hearts will break a great deal sooner than they will: A Miscarriage of this kind does seldom or never happen, if things were well inquir'd into; the Miscarriages are generally for want of this Attention and close Application. These sort of People will unavoidably have liberty enough betimes, and therefore may well bear with Restraint and Labour, before-hand, for a season; and if they are not taught how to employ their time in something fit and worthy of them, whilst they are young, they will never know how to do it, when they grow up, and are wholly Masters of it; so that the Parents, who are only careful to provide Estates for their Children, do truly forget half of their Businels; which is, to fit their Children for their Estates.

Now since it is not either fit, or decent, or at least not customary, to put these People of Quality to Trades or settled Callings, it must needs be worse with them, than their Inferiours, if they have not something equivalent to such Employments, to quicken their Industry and Diligence, to keep them busied and amus'd as profitably as they can, to inure them to the Labours of the Mind, and fit them for Services that may, in time, be proper for them.

There is no Body, but is born and oblig'd to serve his Country in some Capacity or other; and they, who are most at liberty from their natural and domestick Necessities, whose Bodies are not tied

ties to labour, and earn the Sustenance of a Family, and to provide for their Relations, by following some Vocation or Employment, are most oblig'd to give their Service to their Country, because they have most Leisure, and fewer Avocations; and this the most profuse and negligent, the most voluptuous, idle and unserviceable Creatures of Quality that are, know not how to deny: They are always ready to own their Obligation to serve their Country in Offices of Honour and Advantage: But then 'tis certain, that they ought to be fit and qualified to discharge those Duties to the Publick; which they can never be, unless they are bred up, whilst young, in a most diligent industrious Pursuit of such Attainments as will qualify them for such noble Services.

If Parents were as much oblig'd to seek their Children's Mischief, as they are to provide well for them, and were to study long for it, they could not find a more effectual Way of doing it, than by breeding them up in Idleness and Softness, leaving them to themselves, and to their natural Listlessness; neither charging their Memory, nor quickning their Invention, nor trying their Judgment, nor putting them to any Strait or Difficulty: They would, without any farther Trouble, be undone; for, under all these Prejudices, the Soul will still be active, and, not being under any good Direction, will be active to Mischief: The natural Inclinations will unquestionably sway; for there is neither Reason nor Employments to hinder them, which are the only Things we have to oppose to the Importunity of Temptations. *How can I do this*

*this Thing, and sin against God?* is an Argument of great Religion; but to be well employed, and full of honest Business, is a much greater Security, in as much as it is better to be deaf, than parly with the Devil, when he is laying Snares, and trying to corrupt us. By doing nothing, you shall quickly learn to do Evil; it is the Stair below it, and you cannot miss of stepping on it. The Senses are awake to every thing that calls; ready to entertain all evil Motions and Suggestions, comply with all Desires; and, in a word, to fall into all the Snares that are laid for them.

Now though these Matters do not look, at first, as if they any ways belong'd to making due Provision for Children; yet Experience will quickly shew, that all Provision else, without this Care, will either be to none, or to little purpose: A great Fortune will only prove a great Temptation to Folly and Extravagance, unless the Mind be fitted to it, and prepar'd to use it well and wisely: It will only serve to expose them to the greater Scorn and Contempt, and shew their Weakness more conspicuously: So that the Kindness, Parents are so forward to express in amassing great Estates and Fortunes for their Children, will not be so truly beneficial to them as they design it, unless they also take more care about their Education, by inuring them to Diligence and Industry, by accustoming them to close Application and Attention to whatever they are about, tho' mean and inconsiderable; for by these means they will contract good Habits, and be fitted for Business of greater moment, when it comes upon them,

them, and fitted to repair the Breaches Chance may make in their Estates. And that must certainly be the best Provision for Children, which will stand them in best stead in all Conditions; which will help them to raise themselves from Meanness to Sufficiency, or Plenty, and help them to improve a good one to better, and help them to prevent a Fall, or to bear it well, and to recover it again. This is the Benefit of a good Education, being accustomed to Pains and Labour both of Body and Mind, whilst young and pliable, and susceptible of Impressions: And therefore this should be provided for especially, and in the first place: This is to be the Bottom and Foundation, and upon this we may build whatever Good we will, for it will bear it; and, without it, all the rest will fall to nothing.

I should come, in the next place, to consider how this Duty of Parents, to provide for their Children, comes to be so frequently dispense'd withal, by disinheriting of Sons, and depriving Daughters of their Fortunes; how these Proceedings are reconcileable with Reason, Nature, and good Conscience, and the Laws of our Religion: But this will deserve to be considered apart, and by itself.

*D I S-*

**D I S C O U R S E VI.**  
**T I M O T H Y V. V E R S E 8.**

*But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own House, he hath denied the Faith, and is worse than an Infidel.*

**H**aving shewn already, from these Words, the Obligation Parents lie under to make Provision of Things temporal for the Livelihood and Subsistence of their Children, according to their several Ages, Quality, and Capacities ; and laid down some Directions withal, how to make such Provision more serviceable and useful to them, by a prudent Education of them ; and shewn also, how Christians, neglecting so to do, are said to *deny the Faith*, by not fulfilling, but acting in opposition to, the Commands of Christ, which injoin all Parents to make a due and fitting Provision for their Children, and become thereby *worse than Infidels* ; *i. e.* than such as believe not the Gospel of Christ, and consequently have no other Motives to the discharging the Duty they owe their Children, than what bare Reason, and natural Affection, and the civil Laws of their Country, suggest and offer : Whereas the Christians have, moreover, the positive Commands of God, the common Parent of us all, the great Encouragement of Promises of endless and inestimable Reompences, and the Threatnings of everlasting Death to the Neglect, or the Contempt of God's Commandments, to stir them to Obedience. I

am now to shew, how this Duty of Parents, to provide for their Children, comes to be so frequently dispense'd withal, by the disinheriting of Sons, and denying or depriving Daughters of their Fortunes ; how these Proceedings are reconcileable with Reason, Nature, and good Conscience, and the Laws of our Religion, and then to make an end of this Subject.

That Children should succeed to their Parents, and inherit their Estates and Goods, is agreed, on all hands, by all Nations that were ever civiliz'd, and govern'd by Laws ; and the Reason is, that no one hath a *better* Right or Claim to them, whether we consider the Labour of the Parents in acquiring them, or their Affection to their Children : For since they love no Body like their Children, and have a Right to the Fruits of their own Industry and Labour, this Love entitles them best to their Estates, when they are dead, and have done with them : And therefore the Civil Law, (which is the Publick Reason) gives to the Children the Estate of their Parents, though they die intestate, and without any Signification of their Will and Pleasure ; presuming, that they, who make no Declaration to the contrary, do always intend to go along with Reason and natural Affection, which both bestow the Estates of Parents on their Children.

But though this be very certain, yet the Manner of proportioning out this Estate to the Children, how it is to be divided among them, is, and hath always been very uncertain ; most Kingdoms of the World differing from one the other, and most

most of them, from themselves, at different times: And, indeed, it seems to be a Matter properly determinable by the Laws and Constitutions of every Country: For though we are importun'd by many loud and noisy Pretences of a *Divine Right of Succession*, in favour of the eldest born; yet, if examin'd well, the Right of Succession will be found to be built upon prudential Considerations only, back'd with the Authority of God's Commands to his own People the *Jews*. When a Child is born, the Parent sees there is one to inherit what he has, and to succeed to all his Labours; and seeks no farther for an Heir. Thus far is natural, that this Child should enjoy whatever the Parent leaves, and build up his Name and Family, because there is no one else to do it; But when, in time, the Parent comes to have more Children; then the *Necessity* of the eldest succeeding grows somewhat less, because there are more Children that can answer to the same Design and End, and build up the Name and Family, as well as the eldest; and then the Necessity is chang'd into *Decency* and *Conveniency*. It is then most decent, that the elder should be preferr'd to the younger, because he was before him, and has done nothing to deserve the being cast behind him: It is reason enough that he should succeed to all the Advantages, if there be no reason to the contrary. To be born the first, is, as it were, the lucky Chance that God hath given him; the Lot, by which the Differences that might arise betwixt the Children of the same Parents, is decided; and this is that which I call the *Conveniency* of

of the eldest Children's succeeding to the better part of their Parents Estates: For where that is found necessary to the raising and preserving Families, that the better part of an Estate should go along with him who is design'd to build up the Name of the Tribe and House, there can be no Determination made with less Exception, or Blame, or occasion of Dispute and Quarrel, than that the eldest should succeed; because, that he should be the eldest, was the Determination of God, and not the Artifice or Design of any Man. Add to this, that the elder may well be presum'd to be the wiser, and consequently fitter to be the Head and Father of the Family; and, I believe, there will appear but little more of *Divine Right* in the Succession of the eldest, than of any other, excepting what is fetch'd from the Commands of God to his own People the *Jews*. That the eldest amongst the *Jews* were born to many Privileges and Honours, above the rest of their Brethren, is evident from abundance of places in the Old Testament; and that they were to inherit their Fathers Possessions, appears both from Command, and from Examples. So in *Deut.*

*21. 15. If a Man hath two Wives, one belov'd, and another hated, and they have born him Children, both the beloved and the hated: And if the first-born Son be her's that was hated; then it shall be, when he maketh his Sons to inherit that which he hath, that he may not make the Son of the beloved, First-born, before the Son of the hated, which is indeed the First-born: But he shall acknowledge the Son of the hated for he First-born, by giving him a double Portion of all*

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114. *Duty of Parents to Children.*

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all that he hath: for he is the Beginning of his Strength, the Right of the First-born is his. So Jacob says, Gen. 49. 3. *Reuben, thou art my First-born, my Might, and the Beginning of my Strength; the Excellency of Dignity, and the Excellency of Power.* As if the Right of the First-born were built on this. For whence also it appears, that the Right of the First-born was a Right to a double Portion of the Father's Estate. Which is seen also, 1 Chron. 5. 1. *Now the Sons of Reuben the First-born of Israel, (for he was the First-born, but forasmuch as he defiled his Father's Bed, his Birth-right was given unto the Sons of Joseph, &c.* Not that the Sons of Joseph had the Dignity or Principality above their Brethren; but that Joseph's Children were the Heads of two Tribes, which was a double Portion, the Right of the First-born. So Solomon bids his Mother ask for Adonijah the Kingdom also, *for he was his elder Brother:* And so it is said of Jehosaphat, 2 Chron. 21. 3. *that he gave his Sons great Gifts of Silver and of Gold, and of precious Things, with fenced Cities in Judah; but the Kingdom gave he to Jehoram, because he was the First-born.* So that it need not be doubted, but that, amongst the Jews, the First-born succeeded to at least a double Portion of all that the Father had, by God's Appointment and Command; and might lay claim to it by a Divine Right: But how any one else, but Jews, can make such claim to such Succession, is not yet so manifest. But how then can the disinheriting of Children become a Case of Conscience, if so be that the Laws and Commands of God to the Jews, in these

these Matters, affect not Christians? In answer to which, we say, that a Command of God to the Jews, neither is, or ought to be, the Rule of Conscience to Christians, any farther than such Command is agreeable to the Light of Nature, and good Reason: And they who, through Weakness, and an undue Application of such Command to themselves, think themselves thereby oblig'd, are under a Mistake, and bring upon themselves a new Yoak; for a Command to the Jews, obliges Jews only: But when a Command of God to the Jews carries its Reason, Decency and Convenience along with it; when the wife and civiliz'd People of most Nations adopt it into their own Country Laws, and when the Usages and Customs of ones own Land run the same way, and there is nothing better and more reasonable to object to it; *then* such Command of God to the Jews, begins to look as if it affected Christians also: It *looks*, I say, as if it did, but indeed it does not; for it is, in truth, the Weight of these other Considerations that enforces such Command: And because it has had the Honour of being commanded by God, Men prefer it, and make it a Rule to themselves, which, yet, for its own sake, and without those other Considerations, they never would; as appears from our passing by a great many Commands of God to the Jews, without any manner of regard had to them, only because we do not find them reasonable in themselves, nor convenient for us.

The disinheriting of Children therefore becomes a Case of Conscience, upon these Considerations,

derations, to Christians: The Christian Law commands all Parents to make a reasonable and due Provision for their Children; but because this is general and indefinite, and a Man is as much to seek, as before, what Quantity and Proportion of Provision he is oblig'd to make, therefore he looks out for a more particular Rule of Direction in this Matter: And finding that the Laws of wise and civil Nations have, at all times, generally agreed, to prefer the First-born to a considerable Share of the Father's Estate, beyond the rest, for the raising and preserving Families, and for the avoiding many Mischiefs, and for other good Reasons; and that the Laws of God himself to his own People were the same, and that the Laws and Customs of his own Country agree to it, and that there is nothing reasonable or material to object, or oppose, to so doing, the Conscience cannot find a better Rule to walk by; and since it will walk by some or other, it will most reasonably choose the best, and that which is least liable to Exceptions and Inconveniencies.

Since therefore these are the Reasons and Considerations, that induce an Obligation on the Consciences of Parents to make such a particular Provision for their eldest Children, by leaving them the better part of their Estates, they will unavoidably feel Concern and Trouble when they offend against this Rule, without sufficient Cause and Reason; such Cause and Reason as wise and civil Nations assign and allow of by their Laws and Customs.

The Causes, that are commonly assign'd to justify Parents disinheriting their Children, are a great many: I will only mention the most considerable. And, *First*, *the striking of Parents* has been all along esteem'd a sufficient Cause for the disinheriting and casting off Children: There seems to be so much Undutifulness and Impiety in such Violence, that one cannot hear of such an Action, without desiring and assenting to its Punishment. The Ancients allowed but of two Excuses for this Crime; the one was, when they could not possibly avoid a huge Mischief from their Parents without striking them: It must be in defending themselves; and that not from a small Correction, or a little Suffering, but from some Blow that might endanger them; some Evil, that could not be presum'd to be intended by a Parent to a Child, but might be the Effect of a blind and unadvised Rage: In such a Case it was *excus'd*, rather than *allow'd*, if a Child should strike his Parent: They did not, for this Misfortune, think he deserv'd to be undone, and disinherited; because they believ'd the Parent himself, when he recover'd his Sobriety of Mind, and usual Calm, would be glad to find a great Mischief prevented by such Opposition. The other Excuse, of Children wounding or striking Parents, was; if it were done in fighting for, and defending their Country: The Ancients preferr'd the Liberties and Safety of their Country to all other Considerations whatsoever: If we do not so too, it is not that we have either more Reason, Honour, or Religion, than they had; but a more contracted, nar-

row Mind, and Interest, to think on. If it had happened that a Father took part with the Enemies of his Country, and in Fight were met and wounded by his Son ; the Father afterwards might not, for this, bestow his Birth-right on another ; he was not hereby presum'd undutiful or impious, nor to be punished as such : The Duty he ow'd his Country was antecedent to, and greater than what he ow'd his Parent ; and the Parent was in a wrong Place when he suffered at his Hands. And yet, for any Cause besides, or upon any other Account than these two, the Children might not touch the Hair of the Parents Head, nor lift up an Hand against them, without falling from all the Right and Advantage their Birth and Descent might entitle them to.

*Another Cause*, that justified the Parent's disinheriting his Child, was, the being found to have contriv'd his Death by Poison, or other secret Method ; the having laid Snares to intrap him into any Mischief : He was deservedly thought unworthy to receive any Benefit from the Parents, who had contriv'd, or was privy to any Design of doing them any Mischief, not only to the taking away their Life, but to the hurting them in Body or Estate. Nay, if the Children did but *accuse* their Parents of any Crime, by which they were brought into hazard of either Banishment, or Mutilation, or of losing their Lives, and the Parents were acquitted, if the Children did this voluntarily, and without Constraint, the Parents might justly disinherit them, and cast them off, altho' this Accusation were of a Crime committed against

against the State: And that, without Contradiction to what has been said before; for a Child is only authoriz'd to oppose the Parent, even to his Mischief, when he is openly and manifestly in War against his Country; but not when the Matter is only suspected, and not prov'd, as in Accusations it is not: For Children are presum'd to think the best of their Parents, and to construe every thing in their favour, and not to be convinc'd, when it is against them, but by plain and evident Matter of Fact: And therefore an Accuser of his Parents has been all along look'd upon as a malicious, odious Creature, and therefore very fit to be cut off from all their Favour.

These Things touch the Parents Person, and are immediately the Effects of the Children's ill Intentions; they are concern'd in them: There are other Causes that justify the Parent disinheriting Children, when they are only negligent of their Duty, either carelessly or designedly; when the Parent falls into Frenzy, or any such Disability; when he is taken Captive by Enemies abroad, or imprison'd at home; if the Child neglect either to look carefully after him, and to make due Provision for him; or to get him set at liberty, if it be in his Power: All these Cases afford the Parent, when he recovers his Understanding and his Freedom, just Occasion of disinheriting, and throwing by such Child; for every Body sees he was unnatural, and deserves no Favour. It is but fit that he should be, in his turn, neglected and expos'd, who suffer'd his Parent to be so serv'd, when he could, with his Ease, have hinder'd it. *With his Ease,*

*Ease*, we must add ; for we must not hastily conclude, that all Children offend against their Duty, who do not pay their Parents Debts, and deliver them from Bonds and Imprisonment : For sometimes the Children are just able to live themselves, and have Families of their own to maintain ; And if they should discharge their Parents Debts, must contract new ones of their own : And sometimes Parents are so extravagant, that there would be no end of paying for them. And therefore all things must be well considered, before we condemn the Children who suffer their Parents to lie in Prison or Captivity : And we must say, at present, that they who can, with Ease, or with no great Disease and Inconveniency, deliver them from any Hardships, are so much oblig'd to do it, that the Neglect thereof is justly punishable with disinheriting, whenever the Parent recovers to an Ability of leaving them, or depriving them of, any Estate.

The other Causes, that are assign'd to justify the disinheriting Children, are such as concern not the Parent's Person, but his Fame and Reputation in some Respects : When their Faults are scandalous, and reflect Disgrace and Infamy upon the Parents and the Family ; when they are extremely wicked and immoral, and give no hopes of Reformation and Amendment, but are, to all Appearance, ~~in~~reclaimable. Vice and Virtue are of as much Importance ; and therefore as much to be considered by Laws, as Right and Wrong, in the building and preserving Families and Tribes : And it tends exceedingly to the Advantage of a State

a State and Government, that Virtue in Children should have the Encouragement of hoping to succeed to their Father's Estate, and that notorious Vice should receive the like Discouragement. There is no Body thinks, that the Compassions of Nature (which are oftentimes its Weakness) should carry it above the Considerations of Virtue and Goodness ; *i. e.* that a Child should without dispute, succeed to all the Advantages of Honour and Estate, let him be never so vicious and immoral, and every way unworthy of his Birth and Education, only because he happened to be born of such Parents. A Parent has not a Method more likely to succeed, nor any Restraint more powerful over the insolent or vicious Tempers of Children, than the Power of putting them by their Estates, when they make themselves unworthy of them : And therefore 'tis the greater Wonder, and the greater Pity also, to see some Parents so unadvisedly divest themselves of this Power before their time, by putting their Children in full Possession of what they have before their Death.

The Case indeed may sometimes happen, when it may be fit and reasonable, and profitable so to do ; but it is but very seldom, and the Necessity ought to be pressing, and the Advantages very great and certain before 'tis done ; because the Events of such a Practice have been often mischievous, and very pitiable. The Children thank them once for all ; they thank them once for that, whose Hope would have kept them in a dutiful Dependance all their Lives long : This forward, and intended Kindness of the

the Parents has made many Children ungracious and unnatural, that would have been, at least, to all Appearance, both dutiful and observant, if they had held them still in Hope and Expectation. There is a huge Difference to be made betwixt a sordid and unnatural Closeness, that will part with nothing to Children before Death, and such an open and profuse Folly, as will part with every Thing, and lay the Parent at the Mercy of the Child. In such a Case, the Parent lets go the hold he has upon his Children, and loses one of the most effectual means of keeping them dutiful and good, and virtuous and obedient: For when there is no more Expectation, there will be no more Dependance; and then it will be well, if they only grow neglectful, and not also insolent and unnatural.

But this a little by the by, when I was shewing how reasonable and justifiable it is in Parents to disinherit Children, whose Immoralities and Wickedness cry loud to Heaven, and reflect Shame and Dishonour on the Family, and exclude all hope of Reformation, or of being an useful Member of the Commonwealth: And therefore if a Daughter were, at any time, found to have transgress'd the Laws of Honour and Virtue, she was, without any farther Consideration, left to the Pity of her Parents, and could lay claim to no Provision, either by the Laws of God or Man.

You see that all these Causes are so reasonable and pressing, that, at the first hearing and considering them, they justifie the Parents disinheritting their

their Children: They leave no matter of Complaint or Murmuring behind them: When once we are convinc'd the Children are guilty of any of these Things, we acquit the Parents casting them off; and the Parents are acquitted by themselves; their Conscience makes them no Reproaches of Cruelty, Injustice, or want of natural Affection, to their Children. In all these Cases, the Children's Offences dispence with the Parents Duty, and remove or set aside their Obligation to make provision for them; and, without these Faults, a Parent will neither be easie nor innocent in casting off his Children: He must not therefore advise only with his own Passion or Humour, but with the Laws and Customs of his Country; he must have such Reasons as other People will approve, and such Cause as will justify him to such as know the Case, though Strangers to him: Nay, though the Laws and Customs may leave a Man to act very *Arbitrarily*, yet it will not be long *Satisfactorily*, unless there appear good Reason at the bottom. A Parent will not be easie, after the fit of Anger is over, in casting off his Child; unless there be better Reason for so doing than appears to the World, or Reason enough appearing, to justify him to others, in what he does.

A Man can never despise the Opinion of the World, or bear a hard Censure with Ease, unless he know something more of the Matter than the World knows, or think himself injur'd by such Censure; and therefore a Parent must know of more Offences and Provocations than other Peo-  
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ple know of, to be easie in rejecting his Child, or other People must know enough to justifie him. These Things are not well enough considered by all Parents, who exercise this supreme Authority over their Children, and disinherit them, and cast them off, for weak and trivial Causes. Sometimes, for no better Reason than some *Unsightliness* or ill Shape, as if the Parents *Fancy* (unnaturally nice) were to pass for *Judgment*, and the Children must be punish'd for what they cannot help, and for what the Parents are themselves to blame too often. Sometimes for a *defect of Parts* and Abilities, not such as would suffice for the plain and honest purposes of Life; but such as are to render them accomplish'd and agreeable, which are often too near to Forwardness and Vanity, and Confidence, and might be better spar'd. Sometimes for some *Personal Dislike*, which is really at the bottom unaccountable, and therefore blameable; for Parents never must pretend *Antipathy* and natural *Aversion* to their Children; the Subject will not bear it, and whatever Parent feels it, he ought to suspect himself of something much amiss, and it will never pass for a good *Excuse* for neglecting Children. Sometimes they throw them off for small Miscarriages, and little venial Faults, that *might* be pardon'd to a tolerably good *Servant*, and *should* be overlook'd in *Children*. It is plain, from many positive Commands, and many Prohibitions, in Holy Scriptures, as well as from Experience and Examples; that Parents *can* be hard and unnatural to their Children, and do them great injury; or else it would

would be strange to tell them, that they ought to consider and make allowances for the Miscarriages of their Children, to remember they are heedless, wanton, and unmindful of the Consequences of their Action, and deserve Forgiveness, even when some fits of Obstinacy will not, for the present, let them ask it; and that it would be over-rigorous to take Advantage of them.

Sometimes it also happens, that the Children are dispossess'd, first of the Father's Love, and then of all their Hopes of Succession, by wrong Surmise or false Suggestion; they are unhappily mistaken of ill Designs by the Parents themselves, or secretly accus'd by others of something that will make them odious to their Parents, and unworthy of their Favour. Sometimes the *second* Wife is to make way to the Inheritance for her own Children, by false and soft Insinuations, to the prejudice of the Children of the first Marriage and sometimes by downright Accusation of them; and sometimes this ill Province falls to the share of other Kinsmen and Relations, whose Prospect of succeeding is not very distant. Nothing can well be more malicious and wicked than this, and the least that a Parent can do will be to consider, who, and whose Friends they are, that come to to provoke and set him against his own Children; he ought in Reason to suspect such as shall certainly be Gainers, if his Displeasure take effect, and proceed to disinheriting: He is oblig'd to be very cautious how he admits of Accusations, and to weigh all things well, before he believe; for the Peace of his Mind

Mind will very much depend upon the Care and Diligence he uses to get good Information. And here it is, that it seems proper to meet with *an Observation, which, they say, [Bishop Sanderson's Serm. 14. ad Aul. p. 199.] is grounded upon manifold Experience, that where the right Heirs have been disinherited, upon almost whatsoever Pretence, the Blessing of God hath not usually followed upon the Persons, and seldom hath the Estate prospered in the Hands of those that have succeeded in their rooms.* It is with this Observation, I believe, as with most others, (where the Judgments of God are call'd in to execute Vengeance) that one or two Examples either make a Rule, or confirm it, if made before; and a hundred others go for nothing, or are overlook'd, that do not fall in with such a Maxim, especially when it is on the side of Justice and Religion, to all appearance.

A Parent may most certainly disinherit his Son, for good Causes, such as I have been already mentioning, with the Consent of Reason and Sense, the Laws and Customs of wise Nations, and the Examples of the best Men, and with the Approbation of God's Law, and his own Conscience, as certainly as he may do any thing else: And when this guilty Person is remov'd, why the next Heir may not succeed without any Terror on his Mind, or Apprehension of God's Anger and Judgments to follow, one can never see a Reason. What Place can the Anger of God, or his Judgments have, where neither the Parent nor the Successor have sinn'd? If, indeed, the Parent do wilfully, furiously, and without just cause,

cause, disinherit the eldest Son, God may, if he see fit, (and that is all) punish the Injustice of the Parent, in bringing to misery the appointed Heir; or if the appointed Heir has, by unjust and wicked means, by Lies and false Suggestions, abus'd his Parent, and excited him to disinherite the true Heir, he may be Debtor to God's Justice in this World, and be punish'd for such wicked Fraud, either in his Person or Estate, or both, as God pleases: But when a Man comes innocently, and without his fault or seeking, to inherit an Estate, there can be no reason to fear God's Anger, or apprehend his Judgments, or the want of his Blessing, if he do not otherwise provoke him. The truth of it is, Mankind is very prone to Superstition; and entertains very greedily such Maxims and Observations as have a face of Piety and Justice, and close with the Fondness of natural Affections, though in truth there be no good reason at the bottom, if well examin'd: And then, when a Man falls into any Misfortunes, (as there are few who do not, and have not their Lives more than chequered with them) the Eyes of People are upon him; and if he be before mark'd out by any of these Rules, and in a Condition capable of having them applied to him, his Misfortunes shall undoubtedly be ascrib'd to his Condition, and be call'd the Effects of God's Judgments due to him upon such Accounts, and for such Reasons. A very false, and hazardous, uncharitable way of judging.

This is what I thought convenient to say upon the matter of Peoples disinheriting and rejecting their

their Children, who are yet oblig'd, by the Christian Religion, to make all due and fitting Provision for them: These are the Reasons that justify the Parents in casting them off, and dispence with all their Obligations; and whatever Parent will act arbitrarily, and without them, will never be able to be at quiet in his own Mind, or perform the Duty he owes to his Children; he must needs be self-condemn'd, *and, with St. Paul, worse than an Infidel.*

I will make an end of this Subject, when I have made this one Observation more; that the Parents, who consume their whole Estate, with which they should provide for their Children, in Gaming, Drinking, Riot, Luxury, and sinful Pleasures, are in no better Condition, nor do any better discharge their Duty to their Children, than they, who, for little or no Cause, Anger, Folly, or Humour, disinherit their Children, and cut them off from their Estates. There is, indeed, great Difference betwixt the *Minds* and Affections of these two Sorts of Parents, but the *Effect* to the Children is the same: And since the Commands of God to Parents, to make Provision for the Children, are given for the Children's sakes; if these Commands take not effect, it is all one to *them* what it is that hinders it: They are full as destitute and helpless by their Parents Neglect, as they could be by their Displeasure; and they become as miserable when the Parents Luxury and Vice deprive them of their Maintenance, as when they are disinherited through causles Anger, and by false Suggestions. And a Parent, who is thus abus'd

abus'd into the wronging of his Children, is much more innocent and pitiable, than he who riotously, vainly, and viciously spends the Estate that might and should contribute to his Children's Sustenance and Welfare; because this Man does willingly deprive himself of the Means of doing his Duty: And the other, who is abus'd, is under a Force and Constraint, acting reasonably to himself, though mistaken through the Faults of other People. And therefore, these luxurious foolish Spenders, when they come to die, or are by Misery reduc'd before-hand to consider, cannot satisfy themselves with knowing, and rememb'ring, that they never had any Thought or Intention to wrong their Children, but lov'd them infinitely, and wish'd them all the Happiness imaginable: They cannot satisfy themselves with this, whilst, through their Folly, and their Negligence, they see those Children miserable, that might and should have been provided for: And it is not enough for them to grieve, as they will naturally do, at the Misfortunes of their Children; but they ought to repent, and ask God's Pardon, for they have trespass'd against him, by the Neglect of their Duty; for that, I have shewed you, is the Way which the Christian Religion takes to make all People in the World happy: It binds the natural and civil Duties upon all related, and concern'd, with strong and strict Commands of God, under severe Penalties, and huge Rewards; so that whatever Christian now neglects the Performance of them, he shall not only be accounted heedless, ill advis'd, and unnatural;

ral; but highly sinful and provoking, and shall, without Repentance, be severely punish'd. He is esteem'd to deny the Faith, and to be worse than an Infidel: And therefore it will be more tolerable for them in the Day of Judgment, than for him.

**D I S**

## DISCOURSE VII.

### I PETER III. VERSES 1, 2.

Ye Wives, be in Subjection to your own Husbands; that if any obey not the Word, they also may, without the Word, be won by the Conversation of the Wives: While they behold their chaste Conversation coupled with Fear.

THE Scripture does, in a great many Places, lay most express Commands on Wives, to live in Subjection to their Husbands; but I choose, in treating of this Duty, to speak to this Passage in St. Peter, because it contains not only the Command; but one of the good Effects of such Submission, which is a great Encouragement to the fulfilling it; for when a Law carries its Reason with it, it is more likely to find a good Acceptance and Compliance, especially with quick and disputing People, than when it comes arm'd only with its own Authority and Power. The Command in the Text is to *Wives*, to be in Subjection to their Husbands. The Encouragement to Obedience is the great Likelihood of good Effects to follow, the winning over the unbelieving Husband; that if any obey not the Word, they may, without the Word, be won by the Conversation of the Wife: Which Conversation is to be chaste, and with Fear; while they behold their chaste Conversation coupled with Fear. Which last Words, (as also the three Verses following) are either an Explanation of what it is, to be in Subjection to Husbands; or a

Description of such Qualifications as will make a very good Wife to her Husband, and acceptable to God ; and will therefore come, in time, to be considered at large. In the mean time, let us see a little, in the first place, to the Command ; *Wives, be in Subjection to your own Husbands.*

It is impossible for any Company of People to subsist any while together, without a Subordination of one to the other. Where all will command, none will obey ; and then there will be nothing done but Mischief. We see, when People meet, who have no Pretensions one upon another, they are fain to agree among themselves to allow a Preference, and some kind of Superiority to some of the Company, that Busines may be done ; they govern themselves either by known establish'd Rules and Customs of Honour and Ceremony, or else they consider Age, Capacity, or Experience : Something or other there is, that determines their Choice, because they find it absolutely necessary to silence the Pretences of every Man, by preferring some or other, that they may obtain the End of their assembling. Even among Friends and Equals, where the least Pretence to *Pre-eminence* would dissolve the Friendship, and break up all the Intercourse, yet is there a Necessity that one should yield it to the other ; and so they do, to make the Conversation useful : And the longer People are to live together, the greater is the Necessity of Subordination and Subjection one to another ; because there will unavoidably rise still more and more Occasions of Division and Difference, which will require the greater

greater Unity: Now there can be no such thing as Unity, where two Parties contend for, or pretend to Superiority, or such Equality as will not yield. All this is evident in Kingdoms, Provinces, Cities, and private Corporations, either great or little. And this should help to convince the Wives, who are now going to make up a Family, that there is an absolute Necessity of Government, which supposes Subjection some where or other: They must needs see, that every Family (the Original, indeed, and Model of Bodies Corporate, Cities, and Commonwealths) must have its proper Superior, whom all the rest must needs obey.

And when they are convinc'd of this great Article, the next Enquiry is to be, whether this Superiority, that is so unavoidably necessary to the Support of Rule and Order, is well and rightly plac'd in *Husbands*, rather than in *Wives*: And for this, they are to consider; 1st. Where Nature has design'd this Sovereignty: 2dly. Where Use and Custom have plac'd it: And, lastly, what the Laws of God say to the Matter. 1st. They are to consider where *Nature* has design'd this Sovereignty: And that we may well presume to be, where she has given the greatest Strength and Abilities; where she has made the Body and the Mind fittest to undergo the Toils and Labours that are absolutely necessary to the Being and Well-being of the World; to the carrying on Business at home, and Trade abroad; to the defending one's Country from foreign Foes, and to the administering Justice to one another: Now

where we perceive Nature has best qualified her Creatures for Performance of these Functions, that are so necessary, that the World cannot subsist in Peace and Order without them, we may very safely conclude she design'd to place the Superiority. Now, whether Women have naturally Strength and Abilities of Body and Mind to go through these Things, if Men should for a while neglect them, need not be question'd: It is demonstrably certain that they have not; and if they have not, who should do them but Men, whom Nature hath fitted for it? And in as much as Nature hath made Men necessary for these Works, she hath made them superiour to such as are not able to do them; for where People are in other Respects equal, Strength of Body and Capacity of Mind will undoubtedly make them superiour. We find it is so in all the Creatures of the World besides. And though there are a great many Instances of the contrary, yet they will never avail to the overthrowing the visible Design of Nature: Though there be many Women superiour to many Men in Strength of Body, and Abilities of Mind, in Fineness of Parts, Greatness of Capacity, Soundness of Judgment, and Strength and Faithfulness of Memory; yet the Number of such neither is, nor ever was, nor ever will be, great enough to shew, that Nature intended to give that Sex the Superiority over the Men: And though Use and Education might make some alteration in the Case, yet all the Use and Education in the World would never fit them for the Performances of the great Businesses, above-

above-mention'd, of Trade and Merchandize, and making Wars abroad, and executing Justice at home : The Abilities of managing which, are evident Indications of Nature's intending to make the Men <sup>notable</sup> superior to the Women.

And, agreeable to this manifest Design of Nature, have been the Usages and Customs of all Countries in the World, at all times ; which was *the second thing* to be enquir'd after. These indeed have been so much to the Disadvantage of that Sex, that, without all doubt, they have done it manifest Injury, and have not had so great Regard to it, as in all Reason and Sense they ought to have had : So far from disputing the *Priority* with them, that they have plac'd them but a little above their Slaves, or menial Servants, contrary to Reason and Decency, and the Design of Nature, who intended them for Friends and Companions in all their Fortunes. Even the Nations, that have been accounted wisest and most civiliz'd, have yet allowed them to be only made for the Solace of Mankind, the Care of some domestick Matters, and the Continuance of the World, and would let them bear no other part in it ; so that the Searches after the Usages and Customs of all Times, will be but short, and do them little Service.

They have only, in the third and last place, to enquire, what help Religion and the Laws of God afford, the Sanctuary of all the Weak, and which provide Security against Oppression and Injustice. When *St. Paul* is giving Rules to the Women, *1 Tim. 2.* he says, amongst other Things,

v. 11, 12. *Let the Woman learn in silence, with all Subjection: But I suffer not a Woman to teach, (i.e. in publick) nor to usurp Authority over the Man, but to be in silence;* And then subjoins these Reasons, *For Adam was first formed, then Eve: And Adam was not deceiv'd, (i.e. first) but the Woman being deceiv'd, was (first, i.e.) in the Transgression.* From whence it appears, that he makes the Creation or Formation of Eve after Adam, to be one Reason of her Subjection; And this Reason would have held good, if both had continued innocent, for it was a Reason before they transgress'd; and therefore St. Paul urges the Subjection of all Women to their Husbands, upon that account, because the first of Men was before the first of Women. But the second Reason of the Women's Subjection, is fetch'd from Eve's being first in the Transgression: She was deceiv'd first, and then deceiv'd her Husband; she was undone by disobeying God, and he undone by following her; she must therefore rule no more: It was part of her Curse and Punishment, that her Desire should be to her Husband, or subject to her Husband, and he should rule over her. Well, but how could this Subjection of the Woman to her Husband be a part of the Curse and Punishment for her Transgression, when it is plain she was to be in Subjection, even in Paradise, and State of Innocence, by virtue of *Adam's being first form'd, and then Eve?* which is St. Paul's Argument. To reconcile these things, we must know, that Subjection in Paradise would have been no Task or Burthen; it would have been more easy and

and delightful to obey in that State, than it can be now to command: It would not indeed have been Obedience, but the doing all they lik'd and lov'd themselves: Man would have then had no Folly, Vanity, Pride, Self-conceit or Ill-nature, from whence proceed all idle, harsh, ungrateful, and imperious Orders: But all his Thoughts, Words and Designs, would have been wise and reasonable, just and kind, regular and orderly, so that the Execution of them would have been most easy and delightful; they would have carried their Conviction along with them; they would have all appear'd so useful, so becoming, and so necessary to their Good, that Women would have hastened, with great Pleasure, to perform them: They would *themselves*, also, have wanted that extraordinary good Opinion of their Worth and Abilities, which makes them frequently perverse and disputatious, when any thing is enjoin'd them; and consequently, would not have found that Rising and Resistancy within, which now they do: In a word, all things else, as well as themselves, would have been much otherwise than now they are; and therefore *Subjection* would have been no Burthen to the *Women*, nor the *Command* have given any great Authority to the *Men*. To make Subjection therefore part of the *Curse*, and Punishment affixed to *Eve*, and her Posterity of the same Sex; it must needs be, that Subjection should be in things difficult and unacceptable, against their Will and Desire, a Subjection to many vain and idle, to many froward and unkind, to many injurious and austere Commands, which the foolish

foolish, severe, imperious Humours of the Husbands lay upon them. *To have their Desire to their Husbands*, signifies, here, *to be subject to their Wills*. You shall not be Mistress of your self, nor have any Desire satisfied, but what is approv'd of by your Husband; you shall be wholly under his Power and Tutelage, he shall command you many Things that you dislike, and yet you shall obey: As unreasonable and extravagant as his Desire shall often appear to you, yet it shall govern you; and you shall have no other to take place, but when he finds it fit to yield it to you.

It is impossible to make less of a Punishment and Curse, than this; and since St. Paul founds this unacceptable Subjection of the Wives to their Husbands, upon this place in *Genesis*, wherein God lays it on them as a Punishment for *Eve's* being first in the Transgression, it is impossible any way to avoid it; and as manifest it is, that so it has been commanded by God, from the Beginning of the World. This Subjection is not therefore founded *only* on the Power and Strength and superiour Abilities, with which it pleas'd God to endue Men, above the Women; nor on the Usages and Customs of the World, (which Power and Strength will always have upon their side) but most especially on *God's Commands*, laying it as a Punishment on the Sex, for the forward Transgression of their first Mother; and that it might not be evaded, as a Curse and Punishment, which all People may avoid as much as they can, the same Thing is commanded over and over again in the *New Testament*, as in *Co-*  
*lossi*,

10ff. 3. 18. *Wives, submit your selves unto your own Husbands, as it is fit, in the Lord.* So in Eph. 5. 22. *Wives, submit your selves unto your own Husbands, as unto the Lord; for the Husband is the Head of the Wife, even as Christ is the Head of the Church;* and concludes, *let the Wife see that she reverence her Husband:* And so in many other places, as well as in the Text. But because *to be in Subjection,* is a Phrase of indefinite and uncertain Sense, since all Inferiours are commanded to be *subject* to the higher Powers, and Children to their Parents, and Servants to their Masters, and Men to one another, as well as Wives to their Husbands; it will be needful for them to know, in what particulars, the Wives must be in Subjection to their Husbands; for a Subject cannot obey his King, nor a Son his Father, nor a Servant his Master, *in all Things;* but each Superior has his proper and peculiar Sway, and each Inferior has a limited Subjection: There is something that sets out the Bounds of every one's Power, and every one's Obedience, and the Transgressors of them become on one side Tyrants and Usurpers, and on the other disobedient Rebels: And so it is with Wives and Husbands; the one may exercise a Power that belongs not to them; and the other refuse Submission where 'tis due, and should be paid. It is therefore certain, that a Wife owes no Subjection to her Husband, against the Laws of either God, or Man: Religion and good Morals claim the first place in her Obedience; and though, I think, the Laws, or rather Customs, of the Land are very tender to

Women

Women offending in the Company of their Husbands, as presuming them under Command and some kind of Constraint from them, yet Religion has no such Consideration, but includes them all under Sin, who commit any sinful Actions; and no Command or Example of a Husband will excuse a Wife offending against a known Law of God, or doing any thing immoral. She owes him no Subjection in such Matters; he is himself a Rebel to their common Lord and Master, whilst commanding any such unlawful Action. But in other Matters common and indifferent, their Disobedience will be faulty, where Reason, and Discretion, allowed of Custom, Decency, and good Fame, will not make their Excuse. Where Men's Commands are evidently unreasonable, shamefully indiscreet, unusual and unheard of, infamous, or unbecoming their Age, their Credit, Quality and Condition, they may be safely pass'd by; omitted, rather than neglected or despis'd: And because it will be asked, who shall be Judges in such Case; the Wives must take good care, that the Commands, which they comply not with, may be such as will justify them to any wise impartial People; so that, who will be Judges, they may reasonably excuse their Non-compliance, and condemn the Men that gave such Orders: It will not be enough for Wives to oppose their Wills to the Wills of their Husbands, nor Reasons to Reasons, unless apparently unequal; because, in both these Cases, they do evidently contend for Mastery; for if the Will and Reason of one be equal to the other's, it is something

thing besides that must determine who shall yield; and then we must recur to what hath been before said, to know who is Superiour.

The Truth of it is, the People, who ought to consider these Things best, are they who never trouble their Heads about them; so far from enquiring where, and when they must obey, and in what Cases they are at Liberty, that they are evermore at Liberty, and never are in Subjection at all, though in the most reasonable and handsome Cases that are; but forget their Duty and their Sex together. They consider not Subjection and Submission, in these Instances, as concern'd in Religion or Conscience at all; as if they were not commanded by God as certainly, as Obedience of Subjects to their Princes, of Children to their Parents, and Servants to their Masters: Subjection, in all these, looks like religious, and relating to the Conscience, and obliging those concern'd by vertue of God's Command; and why the being in Subjection to their Husbands should not concern the Consciences of Wives as much, they will never be able to give a Reason: I have already shewed them, that the Laws of God do positively charge it on them.

But because *Subjection*, in this Place and Argument, does not only signifie bare Submission to the Will and Pleasure of Husbands, but includes also other Qualifications, such as may make them acceptable both to God, and Men; they also are to come into Consideration, when we are treating of the Duty of Wives: And the first that is here mention'd, is a *chaste Conversation coupled with*

with Fear. By Conversation, is understood the whole course and way of Living, all the exterior Management and Behaviour; and therefore a chaste Conversation requires not only the Purity and Cleanness of the Heart, but such an outward, innocent and decent Carriage, as may denote that inward Purity: It is what the Husband may see, because he is to be won by it, and gain'd over, and it is said to be coupled with Fear; because the Fear of God is the surest Preservative of Chastity in the Heart; and the Fear of Man, of Laws, of Infamy and Shame, and ill Report, the great Security of a chaste and honourable Conversation without. There is no need of saying much in Commendation of this great Virtue to Wives; they cannot choose but know, that, without it, they are Wives no longer; the Band of Wedlock is immediately dissolv'd before God; and before Man, as soon as the Husband pleases to ask the Assistance of the Law: But this is not without the Breach of the most solemn and tremendous Vow and Promise that can be thought on; the Guilt of such a Perjury, as cannot ever be aton'd for in this World, and of such horrible Injustice, as can never be repair'd, either to Husband, or to Children. In other Cases, a Perjury may take away a Man's good Name, or his Estate; but there may be some amends made him for both of them, by Repentance: His good Name may be recovered by a Recantation and Denial of what was sworn to his Prejudice; and his Estate may come again, by force of Law, or voluntary Surrender. If the Life of

a Father be taken away by Perjury and Injustice, some Compensation may be after made to his unhappy Children. But the Perjury and Injustice of an Adulterous Wife, are such Offences, as can receive no Reparation or Amendment; even a Confession of their Crime to the injur'd Party, may make him yet more miserable, and do him farther Injury; and, as for Satisfaction, 'tis not in their Power. How strangely hard is it, for such to make a good and true Repentance; how long and bitter should their Sorrow and Compunction be before God, since they have so disabled themselves, from doing any thing besides? Sure, by their flexible and tender Constitution, and these Considerations, no People in the World can sin, with such a sensible and painful Self-conviction, as false Wives: And therefore, there is the less need of enlarging any farther on this first Instance of Subjection to Husbands: The Matter is so plain and reasonable, so just and honest, that they, who will not be subject in this Point, will not (need not, I think) regard the being so in any other.

But it is not refraining from adulterous Practice only, that is enough to denominate *a Conversation chaste*: The outward Carriage must be also honest and inoffensive, void of *Suspicion* as well as *Blame*: And this it will be, if it be *coupled with Fear*, i.e. a tender Regard of Reputation and good Fame, as well as Fear of offending the Husband: They must *provide Things honest not only in the sight of the Lord, but in the sight of Men*. The Scriptures do not only call on People to secure

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cure their Hearts to God, but are exceeding careful to urge them to set forth a good Example to all the World of Standers by: They are by their good Works to glorifie their Father, who is in Heaven; they must not only be acceptable to God, but approved of Men. *I will praise the Lord with my whole Heart, secretly among the Faithful, and in the midst of the Congregation,* saith the Psalmist. So St. Paul exhorts the Thessalonians and Philippians to several Christian Duties, and good Works, *that the Name of the Lord Jesus might be glorified in them.* And so St. Peter would have the Christians have their Conversation honest among the Gentiles, *that they might, by their good Works, which they should behold, glorifie God in the Day of Visitation.* So in other places, *We are to adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour in all things; to have our Conversation worthy of the Gospel; and to walk worthy of the Vocation wherewith we are called; and as becometh Saints; to give no offence in any thing, that the Ministry, i. e. the Gospel Dispensation, be not blamed.* Let as many Servants as are under the yoke, count their own Masters worthy of all Honour; *that the Name of God, and his Doctrine be not blasphemed:* And more nearly to the purpose of the Text, Tit. 2.5. *Let Women be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own Husbands, that the word of God be not blasphem'd.* And again, *I will that younger Women marry, and keep the House, to give no occasion to the Adversary, i. e. to any Enemies of the Christian Religion, to speak reproachfully; that is, to reproach the Holy Religion; as tho', after*

all

all its good Lessons, in all respects, Men liv'd no better than they did before, the Servants were no better Servants, nor the Women better Wives, than they were before they were converted, which were much to the Disgrace of Christianity. So that it is not, truly, enough for a Christian *to be* indeed virtuous and good, if he may also *appear* so; because a good Example is of great use, not only to silence the Reproaches, Obloquies and Blasphemies, or evil Speakings, of foolish, ignorant or malicious People, who, for appearing visible Miscarriages in Management, are ready to charge Religion as a uselesis insignificant thing, but for the good Effect and Influence it has upon all that take notice of it; for as a bad Example turns to the Discredit and Reproach of the Profession, so does a good one to its Honour and Advantage, and gains insensibly upon the most obdurate Minds.

And that is (in the second Place) one of the Motives and Encouragements St. Peter propounds to the Wives, to live in a holy, careful, and religious Subjection to their Husbands; *that if any obey not the Word, they also may, without the Word, be won by the Conversation of the Wives, whilst they behold their chaste Conversation coupled with Fear.* It is much the same Advice with what St. Paul gives, 1 Cor. 7. that if an Unbeliever, either Woman or Man, were married to a Believer, the Christian should not think of parting upon that score; but stay the rather, to win, by a kind, good-natur'd Christian Conversation, the unbelieving Party over to the Faith; *How knowest thou,*

thou, O Wife, whether thou shalt save thy Husband; or thou O Man, whether thou shalt save thy Wife? 16 v. They both of them suppose, that a virtuous, sober, and religious Example, may be likely to prevail, when the Word of God it self, from the Mouth of a Preacher, is of no force or value: And great indeed is the power of a good Example, well manag'd, especially where it is always present, as, in the Case before us, is suppos'd; it is an Argument that is always operating some way or other, a Man cannot help attending to it: He sees, for instance, his Wife, by virtue of the Christian Doctrine, leading a sober, chaste, religious Life, setting the Fear of God continually before her Eyes, and practising the Commands of Christ, not only abstaining from Adultery, and open Falshood and Abomination, which the Laws, and Vengeance of her injur'd Partner might severely punish; but also from all Appearance of Evil, out of the Reach of all Suspicion, guided in all her Words and Actions by the Rules of a strict and severe Virtue; so careful of fulfilling his Desires, and satisfying to her Duty in all particulars, and living in such a handsome free Subjection to his Will, that 'tis impossible he should not have some liking to the Religion and good Principles that influence her to such Obedience and such Virtue: He sees the power of Christianity in such desirable Effects, that he will certainly conclude, it is a useful and most holy Dispensation, a Religion honourable for God, and serviceable to Mankind.

And

And there is nothing sooner likely to convert a Man to a Religion, than seeing it very fit to be a Religion, by its Principles, and finding those Principles operative and effectual to the producing what it aims at. Such an Example will perpetually reproach and disturb him, and give him no Peace, till he comply with it; it is a powerful Method in the Hands and Management of a prudent Woman, and will prevail sooner than all the same Reasons of Religion together, rang'd into Order, with the Noise of Opposition and Dispute.

And if a sober, chaste, religious Conversation, coupled with *Fear*, i. e. with a becoming Carefulness of not offending, and a familiar, easie, free Submission, be the most likely Method of converting an unbelieving Husband to the Faith of Christ; there is a great deal of Probability, that the same wise and good Courses will also obtain, to the winning over Husbands, who are already Christians, from many idle or sinful Practices, and curing them of many foolish and perverse Humours; which may also be a Motive and Encouragement to such a Subjection as the Apostle prescribes, although the Women have not unbelieving Husbands, i.e. such as are not Christians in Profession. Unless a Man be brutaliz'd to a great degree, and in a manner forsaken of God, and left entirely to himself, the meek and quiet, chaste and sober Conversation of his Wife will win and gain upon him. Few Men but have their times of thinking and considering; and when they shall remember and reflect upon the Car-

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riage and Conversation of their Wives, and find, that, instead of falsifying their Vows of Faith and Chastity, they have most carefully and religiously observ'd them; not made them such Requitals as their Perjury and Falshood, according to the Maxims of the World, requir'd and call'd for, and would justifie; but have been wary to a scruple, manag'd themselves so nicely, virtuously and well, that they have given them neither secret Jealousy within, nor Shame and Infamy abroad, and born their sensible and wounding Injuries, to the eye of the World, as though they had been treated honestly and kindly: A Man must be of a horribly hard, inflexible Ill-nature, whom such Reflection will not soften into Love and Pity; the Remembrance of such Kindness, and good Qualities, and such a Conversation, is as likely to effect a Cure, and to reduce a wandring Husband, as any thing besides: He will see and admire the power of Virtue and Religion, and the huge Difference betwixt the Choice his virtuous and deliberate Love made, and that which his impetuous sinful Passion since has thrown him on: How frugal, serviceable, and creditable the *one* has been, and how extravagant, expensive, mischievous and shameful the *other*: How deep a Debtor the Allurements of one have made him to God's Justice, and to what Despair and Misery they have reduced him, whilst the Prayers, and Tears, and Intercession of the other may have preserv'd him for Repentance and Forgiveness. This may not only fill him with good Idea's of Religion, but prove a Motive to his

his Conversion; it may turn his Heart, and bring him to the ways of Goodness; he may see how reasonable it is, that he should be as faithful to his Vows, and true to his Engagements, for the future, as she has been; and, in a generous and religious Gratitude, may set about a Reformation, and redeem his past Miscarriages by After-constancy and Kindness.

It is not indeed certain, that these, or any other Methods, will reclaim a vicious and a faithless Husband; but it is certain, that these are the most likely to do it, and best fitted for it; but at least that every Woman is oblig'd to take these Courses, whether they prove effectual or no: It is that which they both first, and last, and all the while, must practise, and with which no evil, false, injurious Usage can dispence: There must be no Requital in these sinful Instances, one's Sin will never make excuse for another's; and 'twere a sad Revenge that would fall, at last, upon their own Souls. They must still persist in the Performance of their Duties towards God and Man; if their chaste and religious Conversation prevail, they have gain'd their Point, and prov'd the Instruments of the greatest good in the World, to those they love the best, and to whom they owe it most: And if they prevail not, they have the Satisfaction of knowing they have done their Duty all the while; and taken the Courses that were likeliest to effect what they desired and wanted; they are excusable both to God and Man, and shall not fail of their Reward. Whereas, by a light and idle, wan-

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ton and suspicious Carriage, they do not only give offence to sober, virtuous People, and great Encouragement to vicious impudent Attempters; but do Religion great Mischief, weaken it much in the Minds of their ill-dispos'd Partners, who see it has not any of its boasted Power and Efficacy, and strangely alienates their Affections from them, and hardens them in their unlawful Practices: For the most desperately vicious and ungodly Husbands in the World would have their Wives even scrupulously virtuous, and religious, and make the want of those good Qualities and Graces, Pretences for their holding out themselves against them; and therefore Wives are inexcusable that will not try so to reclaim them, especially when 'tis their Duty so to do, let the Event be what it will. This is the first, and greatest Instance of that Subjection which every Wife must live in to her Husband; and we see that it is not without its Encouragement, even in this Life, namely, the Likelihood of reclaiming him to Faithfulness and Constancy, which bring their Reward with them.

**D I S-**

## DISCOURSE VIII.

I PETER III. VERSES 3, 4.

*Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the Hair, and of wearing of Gold, or of putting on of Apparel: But let it be the hidden Man of the Heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the Ornament of a meek and quiet Spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.*

ST. Peter, designing to make all Women as good Wives, and good Christians, as they ought to be, lays down this general Rule, in the first place, that *they must be in Subjection to their own Husbands*: The Reasonableness and Necessity of which, I have tried to shew, 1<sup>st</sup>. From the visible Design of Nature, which hath denied to *them*, and given to *Men*, the Strength and Abilities of Body and Mind, which are absolutely requisite to carry on the necessary Business of the World. 2<sup>dly</sup>. From the Usages and Customs of the World, at all times, which have rather been to their Prejudice than Advantage. And, 3<sup>dly</sup>, From the many Commands of God to the contrary, in Holy Scriptures. And then he descends to particular Injunctions, in order to the same good End, of rendering them acceptable to God, and to their Husbands: One, and a very great one, was to have their Conversation chaste, and coupled with Fear; i. e. not only pure and clean Hearts, but a discreet Reservedness, and modest Carriage outwardly; a careful nice Regard to Fame and good

Report ; such a sober, virtuous and prudent Management, as will denote the Fear of God within, and that the Mind is govern'd by good Principles, and influenc'd by the Laws of Christianity ; so that they, who behold this chast and good Conversation, shall glorify God ; and the Husband, if there be need, shall be won and gain'd upon by it, to the Conversion of his Soul, the Reformation of his Manners, and Increase of Virtue. He is now proceeding to lay down other Rules and Instructions ; such as will very much forward his Design of making the Women good Wives, and good Christians. *First*, Negatively, by shewing them, that the Ways of the World were not such as he would advise, or thought fit either to commend them to God, or their Husbands : *Whose adorning, let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the Hair, and of wearing of Gold, or of putting on of Apparel.* But, *Secondly*, Affirmatively, he shews them what it is he would advise, and why : *But let it be the hidden Man of the Heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the Ornament of a meek and quiet Spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.* I am, first, to speak to his Adyice, which is negative, relating to the outward adorning of the Body : And it is very near the same with what St. Paul delivers, *1 Tim. 2. Verses 9, 10.* *In like manner also, that Women adorn themselves in modest Apparel, with Shamefacedness and Sobriety ; not with broidered Hair, or Gold, or Pearls, or costly Array ; but (which becometh Women professing Godliness) with good Works.* St. Crysostom understands these Words, as if St. Paul were directing

directing the Women how to appear in publick, when they came to Church, and not to be giving any Rules of habiting themselves in general; and therefore he inlarges on them in this manner: *Do you (faith he) come to pray to God, cloathed in Gold and with Embroideries? Are you not rather come to dance, or to make up the Number at a Wedding, or to see some fine Sight? There your Gold, there your Embroideries, there your plaited Hair, and there your costly Apparel, may be seasonable: But here, at Church, there is no need or use of any such things: You are come hither to intreat and supplicate for Pardon of your Sins, and intercede for your Offences; to address to God, and render him propitious to you, and do you then adorn your self? Are these the Tokens, this the Habit of a Supplicant? How can you sigh, or weep, or pray with Fervency, whilst thus arrayed? It will but look like Acting and Hypocrisy; for such Attire and Sorrow suit but ill together.* With a great deal more to the like purpose, suited very well to the Customs of his own Times, and, it may be, to the *Lent-season* in particular. But since the Usages of Christian Countries have long while been otherwise, and that putting on the best Apparel was design'd to do some Honour to the Lord's-Day, and that it might be observ'd with all the *external* Tokens of Respect, as well as with the *internal* Honour and Esteem, and Worship of the Mind; it is not only as lawful to be cloath'd with the most ornamental Attire on this, as on any other Day; but it would be an idle, weak Perverseness to change or oppose the Custom. And whateyer St. Paul's Advice might re-

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fer to, there is no reason to think St. Peter, in the Words of the Text, had any eye to the Women's habiting themselves particularly on *Sundays*, or at the Publick Service of God, otherwise than on other Days in other Places.

But because these two are the only remarkable Passages in the New Testament, that say any thing concerning the Habit of Christian Women ; and upon which *they*, who amongst us affect a notorious Plainness and Simplicity of Apparel, ground and approve their Practice, and may be tempted to condemn the rest of the World of Pride and sinful Vanity, and of living in Contradiction to the Advice of St. Paul and St. Peter in the Text ; it may not be amiss to join them together, in considering this Matter : And to shew, *First*, what is *not* the Meaning of them : And, *Secondly*, what *is*.

*First*, What is *not* to be understood by these Words : And that is, that neither St. Peter, nor St. Paul, are to be understood in the gross and literal Sense, as utterly forbidding the Women to wear any Gold about them, either in Ear-rings, or about their Cloaths ; either in Lace, or interwoven or embroidered ; and all plaiting of Hair ; all Pearls and Jewels, Necklaces, or Bracelets ; and all sorts of Cloaths, either Linen, Silk, or Woollen, that come to a great deal of Money, and are *costly* : They are not to be understood in the strict and literal Sense, for these Reasons : *1st*. The Nature of the thing requires it not : Nor, *2dly*, the Way and Manner of Expression : Nor, *3dly*, the End and Design of the Apostles :

And

And yet, the Patrons of this great Simplicity of Habit, whilst they ground their Practice and Opinion of its Necessity upon these single Passages, taken in the literal Sense, will not be able to excuse themselves from contradicting the Apostles, if either the Linen, Silk, or Woollen, which they wear, cost considerably ; for they are as much forbidden *costly Apparel*, as Gold, and Pearls, and broidering of the Hair, by these Apostles : And fine Linen and fine Woollen are equally *costly*, with relation *to*, and in comparison *of*, coarse Linen and coarse Woollen, as Gold and Pearls are, with relation to fine Linen and fine Woollen, in their several degrees.

Not that these People are blameable, in any wise, for this their Plainness of Attire, (for Men and Women are entirely at their liberty to habit themselves as plainly as they please) but that they ought not to ground the *Necessity* of doing so upon these Texts ; and much less ought they to accuse and *condemn* of Pride, and sinful Vanity, such as go, to appearance, in more gay and costly Cloathing : If they avoid these two Offences, the *Necessity* of going so plain themselves arising from the Scriptures, and the condemning of others who do not so attire themselves, they may do as they see fit in this matter : And though the mistaking these Scriptures will, of itself, do them no harm, yet the censuring other People *will* ; and that does so easily follow from mistaking the Scriptures, that it were better they would throughly consider them ; and then they would find, that neither they themselves *do*, nor any else *can*, conform in Practice

to

to the literal Sense of the Words of St. Peter and St. Paul.

But since I am not speaking to *them*, but to such as understand them better; and yet (I hope) are full as good Wives, and much truer Christians; I will now go on to shew, that these Advices and Instructions are not to be literally understood. And, *First*, the Nature of the thing requires it not; no Body can discern any greater Danger and Malignance in Gold and costly Apparel, than in any other Metal, other Stones, or coarser Garments. Whether it be the Wisdom, or Folly, or the Fancy of People, that has set a greater Value on these things than on others, is no matter; there is certainly no greater *Evil* in one than another; they are all, in their own Natures, alike innocent: And though they prove sometimes the *Occasions* of great Mischiefs, yet they are never properly the *Causes* of them; but the Passions and Desires of People towards them, who, to compass them, will take Courses which must consequently produce mischievous Effects. They are, in this case, not unlike to good Countries that border on the Kingdoms of two mighty Princes, who, finding their Convenience, fall to Wars about them, although the Countries gave no Provocation or Encouragement to either. If the Weight, or Lustre, or their Rarity, give these things any extraordinary Excellence above others, the Delight and Pleasure People take therein is but reasonable; and whatever Evils follow thence, are by no means chargeable upon those inanimate things themselves, but on the Men that cause them;

And

And these things naturally are no worse than Light and Lustre in the Sun, Shape and Comeliness in a Tree, or Beauty, Fragrance, and Variety of Form and Colour, in the Flowers and Herbs ; they are all of them God's Creatures, and consequently good.

But supposing they acquire their Value and Esteem from the Opinion of the World, and People's Fancies, and that this be ill-grounded, and run out into a blameable Excess ; yet 'tis not reasonable to think that they are all of them absolutely prohibited, because Men entertain false Notions of, and are deceiv'd in them : For, *first*, Men have as much true Reason to value *these*, as any other material things whatever : If we can judge of Beauty, or of Usefulness, they are as useful and as beautiful, as any other Parts of God's Creation. But whatever they are in themselves, and however Men may be mistaken in their Judgments of them ; yet as the World was formerly, is now, and always will be ordered, it is absolutely necessary that some things should be accounted of greater Excellence and Value than others : There could be otherwise no living in the World ; no Trade or Commerce could be entertain'd, without such Change and Bargain. And if the Wisdom of all the World, in all Ages, has centred in this, that such and such things should be accounted best, and valued highest, it is a great Presumption that they *are* truly the most excellent and valuable things of the Creation ; but 'tis a down-right Demonstration, that it is necessary to *account* them so : And that such Opinion is well enough grounded,

grounded, because 'tis absolutely necessary that something should be reckoned *best*, and better than another ; and nothing has, at any time, prevail'd above these things, in civiliz'd Countries.

And though it should be objected, That the *Indians* parted with their Gold and Pearls, for Glafs and Trifles, to their first *Discoverers* ; yet it would not from thence follow, that what the common Esteem of Mankind makes valuable, is not truly so : For though Glafs and Gold are of equal value to a Man that neither uses, nor knows how to make use of either, yet to one that does both, they are very unequal : And when the *Indians* knew how much their Traders valued Gold, and what a deal of Glafs, and other gaudy things were purchasable by a little Gold, they grew wiser, and learnt the Excellency of it ; though, at the same time, we must own, that if all the World should set a Stamp of Value upon Glafs, or any thing besides, it must be as valuable as Gold itself : Which shews, that these things are not here forbidden by St. Peter or St. Paul, either because they are worthless in their own Nature, or because we have set too great a Value on them : They are as good and innocent as any other things ; and therefore there is nothing in the Nature of them, from whence we may conclude they are absolutely prohibited.

Nor, *Secondly*, from the Way and Manner of Expression here us'd, although it seem to be absolutely negative ; for so it is in a world of places in the Scriptures : So *Matth. 6. 19.* *Lay not up for your selves Treasures upon the Earth, where Moth and*

and Rust doth corrupt, and where Thieves break through and steal; but lay up for your selves Treasures in Heaven. Here, though the Expression be very positive, or absolutely negative; yet the Meaning of these Words is not absolutely to prohibit People the laying up Treasures here on Earth, for the Necessities and Duties of Life do make it unavoidable: There can be no Provision made for Families and Children, without such treasuring; there can be no such thing as Stock, or Substance; no such thing as Trade and Commerce, unless some People do it to be ready at an Exigence: And unless we can imagine Christ intended to forbid the Merchandise and Traffick of the World, or the Provision for Families and Relations, we must not think he absolutely prohibited the laying up Treasures here on Earth, although the Injunction be expressed in very absolute and positive Terms. But the Meaning is, that Christians should be more intent upon the securing everlasting Happiness to themselves, than the short and perishable Riches of this World: That they should not lay out so much Time and Care, and Pains in gathering Treasures here, that are subject to so many Changes, and of which they can at best be Masters but a very little time, to the Neglect of Heavenly Things; in whose Possession there is not only everlasting Happiness, but in whose Loss there is eternal Misery: There is no manner of comparison betwixt these two Treasures; and therefore lay not up the one, until you have secur'd the other: And so St. Matth. 9. 13. *I will have Mercy, and not Sacrifice:* Which, being

being spoken by God under the Jewish Dispensation, cannot be understood of God's absolutely refusing and disliking Sacrifices, which he himself so frequently commanded, in the Law of Moses, to be offered constantly and solemnly before, and to him: But the Meaning is, I will have Mercy rather than Sacrifice, if they should come in competition; I will not be defrauded of one, under pretence of the other; I'll have them both in their proper Seasons: But should there be an occasion of Preference, the shewing Mercy is more agreeable to Me than Sacrifice; I like the fulfilling that Command of mine, which does an Act of Love and Kindness to another, better than fulfilling that Command which only shews an Instance of Obedience to Me, and has no other Good belonging to it. And so it is in *Hosea 6. 6.* from whence it is taken; *I desired Mercy, not Sacrifice; and the Knowledge of God, more than Burnt-offerings;* where not, in the first place, is explain'd by more in the second. And so our Saviour understands it in the Application, for *I came not to call the Righteous, but Sinners to Repentance.* They had objected to him, his eating and conversing with Publicans and Sinners; and he tells them, that his chief Design was to convert all such from the Evil of their Ways; that his Errand was rather to them than others; they wanted his Assistance most, and therefore they should have it: Not but that he came to call those he names Righteous, as well as those whom they call'd Sinners; for there were no such People as Righteous, for all Men wanted him, and all Men must come to him by Repentance;

but

but the more the Sins, the more the Sinners wanted him: So *Matth. 10. 28.* *Fear not them which kill the Body, but are not able to kill the Soul.* It is impossible not to fear such as can kill the Body; but we must not fear the one in comparison with the other, who can make us miserable for ever. So *Luke 12. 29.* *Seek ye not what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink;* which is impossible to be understood, positively, by at least three quarters of the World, who must neither eat nor drink at all, unless they seek it, and seek it in earnest too, with Toil and great Pains: But the Meaning is, they must not seek the Things of this Life with more Anxiety than they are worth, but rather seek the Kingdom of God. So *2 Cor. 12. 14.* St. Paul says, *The Children ought not to lay up for the Parents, but the Parents for the Children;* which must not be understood generally, and without reserve: For in many cases Children are unquestionably obliged to lay up for the Parents; where they are quite disabled by Age, or Feebleness, or other cause, from taking care of themselves. The Meaning is, it is more usual and more natural for Parents to provide for Children, than the contrary; and not at all to forbid it, where 'tis necessary, decent, or convenient. So *Prov. 20. 13. & 23. 4.* *Love not Sleep; Labour not to be rich;* i.e. do nothing of that kind excessively; do all things moderately: Shew yourself a diligent and careful Man; but be not a Slave to Ease and Idleness; nor yet to Labour and extream Pains for the perishing Goods of this World. And so, lastly, *1 John 2. 15.* *Love not the*

*the World, neither the things that are in the World.* This is a very absolute Injunction in Words, but altogether impossible to be practis'd in the literal and first Sense of them ; for Men cannot help loving themselves, and several other things that are in the World : But the Meaning is, that Men must not love any thing in this World comparatively with God ; *i. e.* so as not to part with it, if he commands us ; so as not to prefer our Obedience, and the Duty we owe to him, before all other worldly Things besides, though never so useful and advantageous, never so delightful to us. So that from all these Passages, which I have taken occasion to explain, and from many others I omit, it appears, that though a Prohibition or Command may be express'd in general, and very positive Terms, yet it is not always so to be understood, without Exception and Reserve : There is a Sense of Reason and Equity to be inquired after, which the Circumstances of Time, and Place, and Person, must determine.

And if there be any one general Rule to know when this negative Particle *not* is to be universally exclusive of all degrees whatever, belonging to the Thing prohibited, it may perchance be this, where-ever the Things prohibited are naturally and in themselves unlawful. So *Rom. 13.13.* *Not in Rioting and Drunkenness, not in Chambering and Wantonness, not in Strife and Envynings.* Here the Things are in themselves unlawful and abominable, and therefore there is no Exception to be made ; no degree of them is lawful, or to be admitted ; they are all, and every of them, stark naught,

naught, and therefore certainly prohibited in general, and without reserve. But where the Matter of the Prohibition is in its own nature innocent, and perfectly indifferent, and becomes prohibited because of some abuse of it ; there, tho' the Words of the Prohibition be general, yet the Thing can be no farther understood to be prohibited than it is abus'd, or as far as may guard it from abuse. So though St. Peter, and St. Paul, prohibited Women plaited or broidered Hair, and Gold and Pearls, and costly Array ; yet are they not necessarily to be understood to prohibit them the Use and Ornament of any of those things in general, tho' the Injunction be express'd in very positive Terms ; because there is nothing, in their Natures, evil ; but what is evil, is by abuse, and accidentally become so ; and because we have seen a great many places of Scriptures express'd as generally and absolutely as these, and yet to bear Exceptions and Reserves, and a more limited Sense.

Nor, *Thirdly*, is it absolutely necessary that all these Things should absolutely be forbidden, from the Design and Purpose of these two Saints and Apostles, which seems to be *principally* the recommending such Things to the Women, as would make them good Wives and good Christians, *Good Works*, and such as became People professing Christianity (as we shall see in due time) and *secondarily* such decent, grave, external Habit, as would answer and become those good Works ; but such especially as would give no Scandal and Offence, nor minister Temptations to another.

Now such Design is no way obstructed by a moderate and well-regulated Use of all or any of these Ornaments ; and therefore there is neither Need nor Reason to conclude that all, nor any of these Particulars here mentioned, are universally absolutely forbidden to Women, either from the Nature of the Things themselves, or from the Way and Manner of Expression ; or lastly, from the End propos'd both by *St. Peter* and *St. Paul* : All these are secur'd, although the Words be taken in a laxer and more moderate Sense.

But though it may be reasonable enough to think these Words of both Apostles (which I join together, because they are so liked to, and explain, one another) are not to be understood literally and strictly ; yet something is undoubtedly forbidden thereby ; and what that is, it may be fit to know ; which was the *second Thing* I intended to consider ; after having shewn what should *not* be understood by these negative Instructions concerning outward Ornaments and Habits.

And, *first*, we may reasonably conclude, that *St. Peter* and *St. Paul* would be understood to forbid all such Gaiety and Costliness of Attire, as certainly minister to Pride, and foster Vanity. There is no Body doubts but every thing sinful, and tending to God's Dishonour, is here prohibited ; and if either Newness, Rarity, and Costliness of Habit, occasion Pride and Vanity, it is certainly here condemn'd. The truth of it is, it seems difficult to conceive what kind of Pride it is, that can be rais'd in People's Minds on these accounts ;

accounts; how they can come to think more highly of themselves than others, and than they ought to do, because they have other Cloaths, and are otherwise drest than *they* are. But whatever it is, 'tis evident, that the Effect, and not the Cause, is here prohibited, since the Cause is every thing by which the Fancy is blown up: And it is not only Gold and Pearls, and costly Apparel, that occasion this disordered Fancy, and this foolish Vanity of Heart, but any thing that People put a Value and Esteem upon, and think it raises them above their Neighbours: For it is not the Richness of a thing that is always the Ground of its Esteem: If a thing of lesser Price be more fashionable, 'tis more desired, and more valued by the Wearer; and if *loose and flowing Hair* were modish, it would then occasion more Pride and Vanity, than the plaiting or the broidering it would do. This is so well known to all, that I need not insist upon it; that the things that cost most, do not please best, if they be not also fashionable; and if they do not please, and are not fashionable, they are not so apt to create that secret vain Complacence in the Mind, which arises from the Conceit, that what they wear becomes them best, and sets them in a Rank above their Neighbour. So that 'tis manifest this kind of Pride, whatever 'tis, is not grounded upon Costliness or Worth, but upon Decency and Modishness; so that People would be proud of Toys and Tinsel, Straws and Rushes, if the Court and City brought them into fashion, and would use them publickly. And since 'tis Pride and Haughtiness, and vain Conceits of Mind,

which the Scriptures intend to forbid and check, 'tis manifest that Gold and Pearls, and costly Array, and plaited Hair, are not the Things particularly spoken against, any farther than they prove the Occasions of that Pride and Vanity. And since other meaner things, if fashionable and in use, occasion them as commonly and certainly as the more costly things ; and that something or other must be us'd and fashionable, it follows very near demonstrably, that Pride and Vanity are the Effects, and things that are prohibited ; and neither Gold, nor Pearls, nor broider'd Hair, nor costly Attire.

And what is said for the Matter and Substance of Attire, is also as true for the Manner or *Fashion* of it, that no one particular Mode either is, or can possibly be forbidden or prescrib'd, as that which necessarily and unavoidably either occasions or prevents this Pride and Vanity ; because it is not this or that particular *Fashion* or Dress that only occasions Pride or Vanity, for another Dress does the same thing when 'tis become the *Fashion* : And 'tis a weak thing to imagine, that such a *Fashion* is *the proudest Fashion* that ever was, for People are alike proud in *all Fashions* : And few or none were ever proud of their Attire and Dress, if at the same time they thought it out of *Fashion*, or did not wear it in spite and opposition to the *Fashion* : And therefore 'tis reasonable enough to conclude, that what Pride arises on the account of Dressing, is owing chiefly to the Opinion People have, that what they wear is modish and becoming ; and therefore all *Fashions* are very

near

near alike hazardous, one as the other, and as apt to raise the Pride and Vanity of weak and trifling Spirits. If *Fashion*, then, be the most obvious and apparent Ground of Vanity, and the Foundation of this foolish Pride, it must certainly be reasonable, if not absolutely necessary, to avoid Conformity and Compliance with the *Fashion*. So one would think, indeed, at first; but when you come to consider it, it is otherwise, and would signify nothing at all; for what is absolutely necessary to *some*, upon this account, is as necessary to all: For if *one* must not be proud and vain, neither must *another* be so; and if *one* must avoid the common and the ordinary occasion, so must *another*, and so must all. But now it is impossible for all to avoid the *Fashion*; for if all avoid it, how could any thing be the *Fashion*? And that which all, or most agree in, and consent to, will be necessarily the *Fashion*; so that all People's avoiding the *Fashion*, would be only setting up another *Fashion*, if they all agreed or fell into one and the same; or leaving every one to their own Devices and Imaginations; which would occasion as much (and 'tis probable a great deal more of) Pride, than their all agreeing in *one*. Upon the whole matter, the Consent in general of most Wearers makes a Dress or Habit fashionable; and when that has once prevail'd, it unavoidably becomes the Standard and Measure of Decency: And when we think a *Fashion* awkward or unbecoming, it is because we have not long enough been us'd to it, or do not find it generally approv'd, or because it has long been laid aside: But to think it *sinful* to follow a

Fashion because new, and conform to Custom in these cases, is, to set up our own Imaginations against the whole World's, not only of our own Time, but of all foregoing Generations, whose Modes and Garbs have all along been very different: And though some appear more antick and extravagant than others, yet that proceeds rather from a Fondness for our own Conceits and Customs, and a liking to what we have been us'd to, in our own Nations and Times, than from any true Grounds in Nature or in Reason. But to conclude that one Fashion is more proud and sinful than another, argues some sort of Weakness of Judgment, or Want of Consideration. Not that some sort of Fashions do not minister more to Wantonness and Immodesty than others, and take up much more time, and hinder People from doing the Good they would otherwise do (which I shall afterwards consider) but that one Fashion is prouder than another, is not at all evident, tho' it is commonly thought so.

It is not for *us* to appear as Advocates for any of these Matters; but when things are generally decried, without any Reason or good Foundation, even good and honest People come to be scandaliz'd at they know not what, nor why: And Scruples are begotten in some weak Minds, which they cannot afterwards get easily rid of; and when some have mistaken themselves into a Compliance with the literal Sense of these Injunctions, they fall (as I said) into an uncharitable Censurousness of such as are not like minded. Till therefore People can discover the Unreasonable ness, or

or the Unlawfulness of complying with the Customs of the Times, which are not in themselves sinful, or till they can discover a better Standard of Decency than the general Consent of People, I see no reason to judge otherwise, than that the common and accustom'd Garb and Attire is innocent and safe. It may, indeed, become the occasion of People's Pride and Vanity, but so may any thing besides; and therefore when People find themselves exalted by such Trifles, and cur'd by their removal, they are oblig'd to leave, and change them presently: For even the best Endowments both of Body and Mind, are no sufficient Plea, or reasonable Excuse, for an extraordinary Conceit of our selves, or for Contempt of others; and much less any vain and gay Attire, that is truly none of ours, but borrowed from the Earth and Sea, and Birds and Beasts, and little ugly Insects, and only serve to cover and conceal our Imperfections and Deformities.

And truly, Virtue and good Qualities must needs run very low, when People seek for Honour and Esteem from such poor Vanities as these; and *scorn*, and injure too, perhaps, their Neighbours, for the want of them; of which, if they had but little more, they would *envy* them; and, if a great deal, *hate* them downright. Not that every Act of Complacence in Apparel, or every Thought that such and such a thing becomes them better than another, and liking it, on that account, is therefore a Sin, or sinful; but the Excels of such Complacence, and the setting a greater Esteem upon themselves, and a less on others than is due upon these

these simple accounts, which elate the Hearts of foolish Creatures with idle Fancies, vain Imaginations, and Conceits of Dignity and Honour, and withdraw them from more grave and serious Objects, on which they might and should be better employed. It appears, therefore, from the whole, that the Apostles do not design to forbid to Women altogether the use of Gold, or Pearls, or costly Attire, the broidering or the plaiting of the Hair ; neither from the Nature of things themselves, which are not evil, but indifferent, and either innocent or evil as they are us'd ; nor from the Manner of Expression, tho' it look like negative and universal, since a great many other Passages are full as absolute and universal, that yet must needs be taken in a restrain'd and equitable Sense : Nor, lastly, from their main Design ; which is to let the Women know, what are the truest Ornaments and Honours of their Sex, Good Qualities, and Good Works ; and that their first and principal Care should be, to secure that main Point, which will recommend them both to God and Man, and make them useful in their Generations ; that whatever Value and Esteem the idle and the inconsiderate part of Mankind may have put upon Attire and Dress, yet that there is no true Worth in any such Appearances : That it is indeed become necessary to do as is commonly done ; but that the Commendation, that arises thence, is not at all desirable, or any ways beneficial ; and that, of all things in the World, they have the least reason to be proud and vain on these accounts, since even the Beauty, and the Comeliness they aim at in these Dresses,

Dresses, (if they should really attain it) were no such mighty prize; a sickly Creature of the Fancy, born and nourish'd unaccountably, and lost by Humour, or a thousand Accidents.

The first Thing, therefore, that is meant, is, that no one should be proud of their Apparel; and that whoever finds herself exalted to undue and unusual Conceits of her own Worth, or inclin'd thereby to scorn, and to despise another, because not clad so well or richly as herself, offends against the Apostles Rules, and is oblig'd to Repentance; and to make the Experiment, whether a meaner Garb, and other Dres, will not abate her Haughtiness, and cloath her with Good-nature and Humility, and other such good Qualities and Graces, as become those who profess Godliness. What is farther understood to be prohibited the Women, in the Apostles Rules, and what moreover are the Things here recommended to them, in order to their pleasing God, and those they are oblig'd to please of Men, will require some other Opportunity to speak to: In the mean time, let them remember, that the business of Apparel is not so inconsiderable, but that the Apostle, both of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, thought convenient to give their Advice and Rules concerning it, when they were treating of the Duty of Wives to their Husbands; which is the Design I have now in hand, and shall prosecute in the following Discourses.

**D I S C O U R S E IX.****I P E T E R III. V E R S E S 3, 4.**

*Whose adorning, let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the Hair, and of wearing of Gold, or of putting on of Apparel: But let it be the hidden Man of the Heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the Ornament of a meek and quiet Spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.*

**H**aving shewn already, both from the Nature of the Things themselves, and from the Way and Manner of Expression, and the Design both of St. Peter here, and of St. Paul in *1 Tim. 2.9.* that Women neither were, nor well could be, absolutely forbidden the Use and Ornament of all the particular Things mentioned by them; but that they were left indifferent to People, and to be regulated by them, as they should see convenient, both as to the Matter and Manner, to Substance and to Fashion, by Prudence and Discretion, so as never to become, by either Design or natural Necessity, the Instruments or Occasions of Sin: I had only Time (in speaking to the *second Head*; which was to shew, what *was* to be understood by these Rules of both Apostles concerning Ornament and Habit, I had only Time) to mention one Particular; and that was, that they were undoubtedly forbidden the being Proud and Vain, and Self-conceited, and the despising, and treating others Injuriously upon

upon the account of Cloaths, and Dres. I am now to proceed to other Particulars, which we may reasonably presume the Apostles intend to prohibit to Christian Women, and good Wives.

In the second Place, therefore, all such Attire as serves to *Loosness and Immodesty*, is here forbidden; and this, not only if it be *design'd* to serve such wicked Purposes, but also if it have a natural, an easy, or an usual Tendency that way. *First*, to be sure it is forbidden, if design'd to such an evil Purpose; because the Design itself is so abominable, the heating of the Fancies, and inflaming the Hearts of heedless and impetuous Youth, and kindling and exciting those impure Desires, that will at last consume both Soul and Body. To dress with this design, is, to be sure, not only *blameable*, but *damnable*, without Repentance; 'tis the *worst* they can do, and *all* they can do, for nothing is wanting, on their side, to compleat the Sin. And as the Design's taking effect does not at all depend on them, so neither will its missing its effect excuse them, or diminish ought of either Guilt or Punishment.

But what shall be determin'd of them, who do not dress with this abominable Purpose, but only with design of appearing Gracious and Lovely in the sight of People, and to gain Affection and Good-will? Why, the Rule in general may be this; that the designing any thing, in Mind and Wish, is more or less innocent, according as the Thing design'd is more or less innocent in it self, and would be, should it take effect;

effect; so that if to appear Gracious and Loveliy, be in it self good, or bad, or indifferent, the designing to appear so (whether it take effect or no) will be good, or bad, or indifferent, accordingly. And therefore whoever would know, how far she may innocently dress with this design, must ask her self what she intends, what she desires that Grace and Comeliness for, and what use she designs to make of People's Approbation, or their Admiratio[n] of her; and according as that is better or worse, so will her Dressing and Adorning of her self be more or less innocent.

Some of the Ancients (*S. Cl. of Alex. l. 3. 11. Tertul. de Cult. Fam. 2. 4.*) seem to allow the Wives a greater liberty in Dressing, than to other single People; but they say, it should be only where 'tis fairly probable, at least, that the Affections of the Husbands cannot otherwise be easily retain'd; but they do at the same time reproach the Folly and the Lightness of those Men, who considered such Appearances more than the true and only Ornaments, the Virtues and good Qualities of Women: And they restrain the Wives appearing handsomer than ordinary to the Husbands only; which may indeed be done in the design, but not as to the effects which will have influence upon other People also. But though there may be something of Reason in satisfying some Desires; yet it cannot be a Rule of any great Security or Prudence; because some Husbands may be light, and wanton, and fantastical themselves, and their Fancies prove but weak and simple Guides: And though they should be per-

permitted to take a greater liberty with respect to their Husbands, and the pleasing them; yet because they live and converse with other People, they are prohibited (as well as other Women) such Dress, as, though they should design to hurt or please no Body at all; yet may have, in it self, a natural, easie, or an usual Tendency to Evil, and minister Temptations to another.

It is presum'd that all Men act upon some Grounds, and that our Reason and other Faculties are given on purpose to direct and govern us in all our Actions, and to consider with them Causes and Effects, Actions and Events, natural and necessary, probable and accidental, such as are like to be, and such as may possibly be; and from these Abilities of considering, judging and determining, arises the Guilt and Condemnation of Precipitancy, Heedlessness, and Acting inconsiderately. And as a Man is pitied reasonably, that falls into Misfortunes which he could not possibly foresee, nor possibly prevent; but blam'd and condemn'd, that suffers what he neither needed, nor should have done: So is a Man or Woman excus'd, for what Events are accidental and unusual from their Acts, but blameable and chargeable with such Events as might be reasonably expected; and were both natural and easily consequential of such their Actions, although they thought not on them, or at least design'd them not. When Men take the proper, natural and ready Means to the attaining of an End, and such as could not probably miscarry, and such as they must needs have taken, had they purposedly design'd

sign'd that End; it will be still presum'd that they intended it, whether they *did* or no. And so it is in the Matter before us; although a Garb and Fashion should not be at all design'd to serve to any evil and immodest Purposes; yet if it naturally did so, if it were such as easily might minister Temptations to unwary forward Hearts, to heated and depraved Imaginations, and raise unclean Idea's in the Minds of ill-dispos'd People, it were undoubtedly unlawful: Such Garb and Fashion must unquestionably be forsaken: There, neither Multitude, nor Quality, nor Custom could excuse: There it would be, that *we must not follow a Multitude to do Evil*: There, no Examples would avail to an Excuse: There, it would be to no purpose to say they design'd no Evil, for 'tis not enough not to design, but they must give no manner of just Occasion of it; and tho' the Parties take not this Occasion as a thing that's *offer'd* them on purpose, yet if it may be easily and naturally (according to the wicked Inclinations and Propensities of People) *taken* and laid hold on, it is to be presum'd and look'd upon as *given*. 'Tis true indeed that he is in fault, and shall be punished, that *takes* the bad Occasion not design'd to be given; but 'tis also true, that she is to be blam'd and shall be punish'd, that ministred so proper and so easie a Temptation.

But if the Garb or Dress be such as cannot easily and naturally tempt, then let the Event be what it will, the Party gave it not, and so is innocent. The short of the Matter in this particular is this; to design an evil thing is Sin, although you don't

effect

effect it, because you have done all you could; and therefore, to dress with a design of ensnaring weak and sinful Hearts, and to serve immodest Purposes, is most undoubtedly a Sin, whatever be the Effect: And to effect an evil End, *may* be a Sin, although you don't design it, because you took the proper and the usual Courses to effect it; and because the Effect depends not on Designs and Purposes, but upon natural and proper Mediums; and because you knew, or ought to know, that that was very likely to be the Effect and Consequence of that your Action.

But, after all, it is not easy to determine what kind of Garb and Dress does naturally and easily, and usually produce these bad Effects; for Modesty, and Shame it self, is, in many Cases, something relative, and depends upon Usages and Customs of Places, and the Consent of such a People: And that, which is accounted Modesty in some Countries, is lightly regarded in another; and the Opinions of the same Nation alter by Time and Circumstances, so that People may pass too hasty and unkind a Censure upon these Occasions, unless they give themselves leave to consider: And yet, for all that, the Parties most concern'd are not left in such Uncertainties, but that they may, if they will set about it, guess pretty tolerably, and safely to be sure, whereabouts the Danger lies, from whence the Occasion of Temptation rises; and are, according to their Knowledge, and the best of their Guess, oblig'd to remove the Occasion, to stop those fatal Inlets of Temptations, whatsoever they be;

or else they will most certainly offend against the Apostles Rules, which do at least forbid such Garb and Dress to Christian Women, as either naturally or designedly serve to Immodesty and Looseness in themselves, or minister Temptations to another.

*Thirdly*, All such Attire and Dress, as spends and takes up too much Time, may reasonably be presum'd to be forbidden, because our Time is given to better Purposes; it is not, properly speaking, our own; but so much is to be expended on Things absolutely necessary, and so much on Things profitable and convenient for us, and none at all on Things hurtful.

The Consideration of the great Work that every one has to do, of the uncertain Continuance of the Time we have to do it in, of the Diversions and Impediments we daily meet with, from the necessary Busines, the Corruptions of our Hearts, and the Temptations of this World, have wrought so powerfully and deeply on the Hearts of many People in all Ages, that they have quite abandon'd all the World, feasted themselves from all Company, and Busines, and given themselves entirely up to God, devoting themselves to Prayers and Praises, and Repentance. Now as many of these People are not over-hastily to be condemn'd, so neither are they over-hastily to be imitated; for it hath pleas'd God to make the Duties, and the Busineses of Life, the Instances of our Obedience; and whilst we are discharging them, with Care and Honesty, we are truly serving God, and fulfilling his Commands.

And

And when People fly from the Affairs of the World to Solitude and Contemplation only, they only shew that their Opinion is, that the *Theory* of Virtue is equal to the *Practice* of it, which is certainly a Mistake: And though there may be more Pleasure to one's self in Speculation, than in Action; yet certainly the Exercise of Virtues is much more beneficial to the rest of Mankind, and better answers all the Purposes of Religion, which are, to honour God, and profit one another.

The Use that I would make of this Consideration is, that the more thoughtful and considering People are, the mighty and momentous Work of their Salvation will the more be laid to Heart; and the less Time they will be sure to spend in trifling and in needless Matters: And though, it may be, all the Art and Skill of Man cannot lay down certain, general, or particular Rules, how much Time is absolutely necessary for the discharging such a Duty, and how much may safely and innocently be bestowed on such and such Purposes, what is sufficient for Diversion, and relaxing of the Mind, and when Leisure becomes criminal; though it be impossible to determine with Exactness in any of these Particulars for another, yet it is not so hard for any one, that is but tolerably careful, and inclinable, to do it in their own Case; and yet they should not use too great Exactness and Nicety in weighing these Matters, since there is no need, and Scruples may too easily arise, which are of great Trouble, and no Use. Let People consider

that they have much to do, and that is absolutely necessary to be done ; and much, that is more considerable than this they are about ; and that too little Time, expended on adorning and setting out themselves, is much more tolerable and safe, than too much, and they will want no great Advice in these Cases, nor much offend by such a Negligence: They must needs determine for themselves in all these Matters ; and they may do it safely on the better side, to be sure ; so that the Rule, in this Case, is both short and easy. It is unlawful certainly to bestow that Time on dressing and adorning one's self, that is due to God and Religion ; that should be spent in worshipping and serving him, and that is given on purpose to us, to secure our everlasting Interest with him ; or that which is owing to our Neighbours, our Relations, or our selves, in the several States of Life, and in the different Respects we have to them all. So that not only the Time that is taken from God, but from any one else we are oblig'd to serve and care for, is mispent, and ill bestowed on these unprofitable Exercises. And though a Woman may be constant in her Prayers, and Reading, or what other Spiritual Exercises she may be put upon ; yet it is not enough, if she employ those Hours on tricking and adorning her self, that are due to the Discharge of the Office of a good Wife, or Parent, or the Mistress of a Family. For these are all of them *Duties*, and must be paid, and will not be excus'd, whereas the other might be better spar'd: It is not only an Imprudence, but a faulty Neglect in any Woman,

man, to give that Time to Idleness and Vanity, and dressing up her self; which might, and ought to be employed, in looking after the Concerns of her Husband and Family, her Children and her Servants; which is the End and Busines of her Relation, as a Wife.

*Fourthly,* We may reasonably presume, that both St. Peter and St. Paul forbid such Dress, as by its Costliness prevents and hinders People from doing that Good which they might otherwise do, by Charity, in its several Instances: Not that whatever Money is expended on Things, that are only pleasant and delightful, is ill spent, or ought to have been bestowed on Charitable Uses: For that's an Opinion that has neither Truth nor Reason in it; for many Things, that are neither absolutely necessary, nor yet so strictly convenient, but that one may well be without them, are yet exceeding lawful, and indifferent to be us'd, or let alone, as People see fit. Otherwise it would be unlawful to do any thing in the World almost but Alms; no one must purchase any thing, but what was absolutely necessary, because the Superfluity might be better employ'd: And even of things absolutely necessary, no one must take the better, when the worse will serve, because the Surplusage of Price might serve to Charitable Uses; and the Mind would be perpetually perplex'd. And sometimes the innocent and lawful Pleasures of this Life, are in a manner necessary to the sweetning of Men's Cares, to the relaxing of their Minds, and to the making Life it self go down with any tolerable Relish; but it

is the Excess of any thing of this Nature that is blameable, it is the Extremity of things that is to be avoided. And in the particular Matter before us, it is that excessive Costliness of Apparel, that disables People from expending any thing on good Uses, that ought to be condemn'd; When the Woman carries the Fortune of a Family about her, and almost labours under the weight and pressure of her Ornaments, and is really in some Pain her self, for the fantastick and imaginary Pleasure of thinking she is acceptable to another. This must needs be blamieable, because it is choosing to do that, which is, at least, neither necessary, nor convenient, nor commanded, before that which is both excellent, and necessary, and their Duty: Such as the doing Acts of Charity, *i.e.* Acts of Kindness in their several Relations, and according to their several Qualities and Abilities; for since Charity and doing Good is the very End of God's bestowing Riches upon People, and the Pretence and Ground of their desiring them, and the best and truest Use they can possibly make of them; they must needs be self-condemn'd, that hinder themselfes from putting Riches to this good Use, by laying them out so very extravagantly and unprofitably upon themselves; that, to please a vitiated Imagination of their own, and attract the Eyes of others, they, in some sense, defraud so many poor and needy Creatures of the true and solid necessary Comforts of this Life; that sweep the Ground with that, whose Purchase would have cloath'd the Naked, fed the Hungry, satisfied the Thirsty, and

and comforted the Hearts of many Sick, and Prisoners.

I do not choose to urge this Matter with the many Instances and Examples of famous Saints of old, who parted with their Garments, sold their Ornaments and Jewels, to feed and cloath their Saviour, in his needy Servants; for though they are glorious Instances, burning and shining Lights; yet they are rather hung to shew where Folks *may* go, than to direct them where they *must*. Whatever any one does in this kind, is unquestionably very good, but yet not necessarily to be imitated by those that are *not*, nor those that *are* in the same Circumstances; but they may serve to shew, that, certainly, these excellent and charitable Christians would have thought it an unpardonable Fault, to have bestowed any excessively superfluous Cost upon themselves, when they thereby should be disabled from complying with so many noble and good-natur'd Precepts of their Lord and Saviour, in behalf of Charity.

*Lastly*, We may reasonably presume, that the Apostles intended to forbid all such Costliness of Apparel, as exceeds the Quality and Ability of the Wearer. *First*, Because this is an Offence against *Decency*, that natural and becoming Order, which both the Wisdom and the Custom of all Times and Places have agreed upon, as most convenient to discriminate and difference People one from another, and, in the matter of Quality, to prevent all Disrespect, Disorder and Confusion. And though an Offence of this kind, barely thus considered, be not a Sin, indeed, against

God; yet, in wise and civiliz'd Nations, this kind of Luxury has more or less been frequently restrain'd by Penal Laws; which shews not only some Inconvenience, but some kind of Deformity, and natural Indecency to belong to it. But *Secondly*, It frequently occasions Poverty to the Family, it exhausts the Gain and Labour of the Calling most unconscionably, when that, which should maintain the House, and keep the Children, and support the Trade and Credit of Men, is trifled off in Show and gay Appearance, not only to the Shame and great Disgrace, but to the Ruine (often) of the Husbands. It breaks the Heart of Industry, to see its Fruits squandered so lavishly away, so simply, and so soon, by light and wanton Fancies: And when Men see the End of all their Toils so near, they are frequently tempted to a careles and a desperate Ill-husbandry: Besides the necessity there is of contracting Debts, and entering into new Engagements to support the Vanity, which occasion them a thousand Mischiefs, and which are almost unavoidable, where People will go beyond their just Abilities and proper Qualities. It is impossible for any Woman to be a good Wife, without considering this; 'tis a wrong Course that People take, to be always thinking on their *Family*, or *Fortune*, and forget their Husbands Quality and Estate, by which alone they are to govern themselves in these Matters. They call their Marriage, *changing their Condition*; they should remember, among other Senses of those Words, that they change their Condition for that of their Husband, be it what

it will, better or worse, and suit their Minds to that, and then the rest will follow as it should.

But *Thirdly*, It cannot easily be, but that the Occasion of this excessive Costliness and Gaiety must be, at the bottom, Pride. It is very possible, and very frequent (I hope) for People to bear as good and humble Minds, under the richest and most costly Attire, as under the most coarse and mean; and 'tis some kind of Defence, when People go according to their State and Quality, that they are not therefore proud and haughty: But 'tis almost impossible, when People will exceed their Quality and Estates, to fatter such a Vanity on any thing but Pride; one can't tell where to lay it else. And this should be considered by all Women as well as Wives, since others are as guilty of this Extravagance as they.

These are the Things that we may reasonably presume, the Apostles intended to forbid the Christian Women: *First*, All Pride and Vanity, Self-conceit, and Contempt or Scorn of others. *Second*, All such Habits and Fashions as may (whether design'd or no to do it) serve to wanton and immodest Purposes, and prove Occasions of falling. *Thirdly*, All such Dressing as consumes that Time that is due to God, their Neighbours, and their selves, and hinders them from carefully and soberly discharging all the Duties that they owe, in their several Relations, to Husbands, Children and Servants. *Fourthly*, All such Costliness of Habit as disables them from doing good in their Generations, and from exercising such Acts of Charity, as they otherwise should,

should, and, may be, would perform, but cannot, through their lavish and extravagant Expences on themselves. And, *Lastly*, all such Costliness of Habit, as is above their Qualities, and just and reasonable Abilities; such as appears an Affectation of greater Wealth and Honour, and Superiority, than is truly due to them. These are Things that no considering Body can suspect are not forbidden; because, with retaining these, the Women can neither be good Wives, nor good Christians. And they, who keep within these Bounds, cannot reasonably fear offending either in the Matter, or the Manner of their Dress.

I have only to remark, that the Rules of this or any other thing whatever, though never so strictly and cautiously laid down, will be subject to Misconstruction and Mistake, (and consequently the Practice to Miscarriage) without some Care and Discretion in considering and applying them: In every one of these Particulars before-mentioned, there are some Niceties and Difficulties, that if People will not well consider Things and Circumstances, they will fall upon, and argue obstinately, and censure confidently and uncharitably. There are Exceptions to be made, and some Allowances in each Particular: For, *First*, that may be accounted Pride and Haughtiness, which is, it may be, unhappily the natural Air and Mien of People; and that may be truly Pride in some, that is but decently assuming in another. And, *Secondly*, some heated and corrupted Hearts may make a Dress, which is neither naturally nor designedly immodest, serve to inflame

inflame them to impure Desires, and make to themselves Temptations of every thing. And, *Thirdly*, some Dressings on Occasions, which every one cannot know or judge of, may expend more time than others, and more than is ordinarily taken by themselves, and cause them to neglect some greater Duty for the present, which After-diligence may well repair. And, *Fourthly*, there may happen some accidental Occasions that may require more costly Habits, than is well-consistent, for the present, with doing Good to others; every thing has its Season. *Lastly*, There may be Occasions, where it may be lawful and expedient both, to exceed themselves in Habits, and forget their Qualities and Stations, which they may afterwards as seasonably remember, and return in Soborness and Constancy again to themselves. And therefore People are not to be over-scrupulous themselves in any of these Matters, nor hasty in their censuring another. There are too many Things to be considered, to determine quickly. One may with much more Ease acquit or condemn one's self, in all or any of these Particulars, because we know ourselves much better, and can frequently recover to our Memory the Principles we go upon, and know their Firmness, or their Failings. A little Understanding, with a great deal of Sincerity and good Intention, will be able to direct sufficiently and safely in any of these Matters.

Haying therefore shewn in what Sense these Words of St. Peter, consider'd with those of St. Paul, are not to be understood: And, *Secondly*, in what they were most probably to be taken, I should

should now proceed to shew, what Ornaments the Apostles advise the Christian Women more especially to provide and look after, to recommend themselves to God, and to their Husbands. But because that Subject will take up more time, than is now left us, to speak to it, I will, for the present, add a few farther Considerations concerning Habits, and conclude.

And, *First*, although these Rules are most especially directed, and relate to *Women*; yet are the *Men* also concern'd in them, and may offend against them: The Reason of the Injunctions extends to them; and if they transgress in any of these Particulars, no question but they are to blame; and so much more than Women, by how much they account themselves the more reasonable and superior Creatures of the two. It is true, that *St. Peter* and *St. Paul* address their Instructions to the *Women*, warning them against the Weaknesses and Failings that have all along been reckon'd properly their own, and more peculiar to their Sex: But 'tis as true, that they would have those Imperfections cur'd and taken away where-ever they appear'd; and therefore, if they mistake the Sex, they are yet right in their Design and Purpose, and undoubtedly forbid to *Men*, whatever is as reasonable and fit to be forbidden them, as to *Women*: And therefore Pride and Vanity, and Self-conceitedness, upon the score of Garb and Dress, all vicious and loose Designs, all intolerable Waste of Time, all extravagant Expence, and all undecent Habit, unbefitting their Condition and Estate, are as much prohibited to *Men*, as *Women*,

men, by the Scriptures, and are truly more shameful and contemptible in them.

Secondly, All other Women are concern'd, as well as *Wives*, in these Injunctions ; all, that are capable of offending against Rules, are capable of observing them in greater or less degree, and are therefore so far concern'd in them : And since the main Design of the Apostles is to make the Women good Wives and good Christians, the Observance of their Rules is *sure* to make them good Christians, and to dispose and fit them to be good Wives, against they come to that Estate.

'Tis a great Reproach to the Wisdom, Sobriety, and Consideration of the Men, to see the Women reckon themselves so sure of gaining their Designs and Ends upon them, by the Care and little Arts they use in dressing and adorning themselves. They say, in effect, these wise and noble Creatures, that are so much our Masters by design of Nature, Custom, and God's Commands, and so superiour in Abilities of Body and Mind, are yet ensnar'd by little Fineries and Deceits, and caught by Baits as silly and fallacious, as the simplest Birds and Beasts, and Fishes. They say a great deal more than this, in truth and in effect, when they put on their fine Attire, with full account of their Design's succeeding ; and Men deserve this scornful Imposition, who look no farther than Appearances, and are govern'd by their Fancies, not their Judgment or Understanding. These kind of Frauds do commonly come home to their Artificers, and are return'd again to their Disappointment, and sometimes to their great

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Misery ; for the People that are thus ensnar'd, by these poor Arts and Deceits, do oftentimes awake from their delusive Slumbers, and fall into a strange incurable Aversion to such as have so cheated them ; and use them as *Amnon* did abused *Tamar*, whose Hatred wherewith he hated her, was greater than the Love wherewith he loved her. The Remembrance of their Folly engages them in Cruelty and Injustice, by which they would revenge their grievous and vexatious Disappointments. This is intolerably wicked on the Men's part ; but such Mischiefs happen too often not to be observ'd by the Women, who might learn from hence how light and inconstant that Affection is, which is kindled and increased by little Shifts and Artifices, and how soon it is extinguish'd ; and into how much Sorrow and Affliction it may throw them.

It is very plain, that the Qualities which should recommend People to one another, who are to live always together, should be such as will last, and continue with them ; not such as please them only for a little while ; but such as will bear Deliberation before, and a satisfactory Reflection afterwards. The *Fancy* is a very Weather-cock, and varies upon every Turn, and little Accident ; and it is too great a Risk to run, to build the Hopes of being happy upon any thing so uncertain. The only wise way, therefore, is to make provision of such Qualifications, as when People are sober, and in their thinking and considering Moods, they shall earnestly desire and value, and know are fit and necessary for their purpose ; such as will not only recom-

recommend them, at first, to Favour and Goodliking, but such as will also keep them in esteem all their Lives long: This is the likeliest way to make their Condition happy. Now these good Qualifications are not the beautifying and adorning themselves with Gold and Pearls, and plaited Hair, the dressing loosely and immodestly, the devoting a world of Time, and most of their Estate, to the setting themselves out, to all appearance, much above their Fortune and their Qualities. These Things will commend them to neither good, nor wise, or sober People; but such good Qualities and Virtues as the Scriptures describe and injoin to them, and which will recommend them to the Favour both of God and Man.

*Thirdly and lastly;* There is something in Habit peculiarly decent, proper and becoming to every Age, as well as Quality, which ought to be observ'd. The Customs of all wise and civiliz'd Nations, in conformity to Nature and good Reason, have all along made difference betwixt the Habits of old and young People, and set a Mark of Lightness upon such as would not seem to know when they grew old, though all the World about them knew and saw it. This Humour is not, of itself, to be charged as sinful, but wonderfully vain and weak, against the Rules of Reason, which injoin to all People, as far as can consist with their Conveniency, *whatever Things are honest, lovely, and of good report.* It argues a Mind intent, and fix'd too fast upon the little inconsiderable Trifles of this World, and too, too little thoughtful of the great momentous Matters of the other: The older Peo-  
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ple grow, they more they see the Emptiness and Vanity of all the Things they heretofore delighted in ; and they refuse them now, although they us'd them innocently *then* : Age and Experience have convinc'd them, that such Things are not Entertainments for considering Minds : They are glad to excuse those vain Amusements past, with the Giddiness and Thoughtlessness of Youth, the Customs of the Times, and Conversation of the Neighbourhood. But now, another Age requires another Way of Living : It is time to look a little forward, and think of putting off the Body itself ; but before that, all the Mind's corrupt and vain Affections, all its Follies, Weaknesses and Failings, amongst which, certainly, the careful and solicitous Concern for Habit and Attire may well be reckoned : And therefore, for People, well stricken in Years, to mind these silly Matters, is to forget the Rules of Decency, and to neglect the Warning God and Nature give them : And, *lastly*, to afford some little ground to Suspicion, that they want those true and real Ornaments and Beauties, which adorn the Souls, and render most agreeable the Conversation of good Women, such as the Apostles, we shall see, describe and recommend in the following Discourse.

DIS

## D I S C O U R S E X.

### I PETER III. VERSE 4.

*But let it be the hidden Man of the Heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the Ornament of a meek and quiet Spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.*

Having spoken at large to the negative Advice of St. Peter and St. Paul, what sort of Ornaments they would not have the Women follicitous about ; I am now come to their affirmative and positive Injunctions, which shew with what kind of Ornaments they are *desirous* all Christian Women *should* adorn themselves : *But let it be the hidden Man of the Heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the Ornament of a meek and quiet Spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price* : In speaking to which, I will, first, consider the *Terms* here us'd, and then the *Things* intended by them.

By the *hidden Man of the Heart*, is meant, the Heart which is hidden in a Man. There is mention made in the Scriptures of the *Old Man*, and the *New*, or renewed *Man*, and of the *New Creature* : By which are understood the *State of Nature*, and the *State of Grace* ; a State of Sin and Corruption, and a State of Regeneration, or Renovation of Life, entered upon by Baptism, and continued in, by leading a Virtuous, Godly and Religious Life, according to the Laws and Commands of Christ ; so that all baptiz'd Christians,

living honestly and well, have put off *the Old Man*, and are become *New Creatures*, renewed and regenerated by the Holy Spirit: And may therefore know their Condition and its Security, although they may not understand the Meaning of the Terms, *Old and New Man, Regeneration or Renovation*. A Man is also divided into the *outward* and *inward* Man, in the Scriptures; which may also be taken sometimes for the *Old* and the *New* Man; but more generally for the *Body* and the *Mind*; for that which outwardly appears, and for that which is secret and undiscovered; for that which is open and seen, and that which is hidden; for Actions and Affections, for Practices and Principles; the first being attributed to the *Body*, the latter to the *Mind*: And therefore *the hidden Man of the Heart*, is the Heart of every one that lies hidden: And this it is the Apostles would have beautified and adorn'd; they would have the *Minds* of Christian Women fill'd with good Principles; their Hearts should be stor'd with such good Qualities and Virtues, as are truly their Grace and Ornament, and cause them to appear as lovely and desirable, as all exteriour Garb and Dress can make their Bodies; and this adorning is to be *in that which is not corruptible*: Gold and Pearls, and costly rich Apparel, are all of them perishable Things; Things that corrupt, consume, and wear away in time; Things that are eaten up with Rust, and Moth, subject to Thieves, and many Accidents: The Things that serve the Body, either for Use or Ornament, are, like the Body, *corruptible* and *wasting*: But the *Mind*,

Mind, immaterial and immortal, requires and looks for Ornaments suited and proper to it. Amongst which, one considerable one is *a meek and quiet*, good and gentle Temper; a lowly modest Opinion of themselves, together with a silent, quiet and contented Mind under their Condition: And because those Ornaments are most valued that are most costly; therefore, to recommend this meek and quiet Spirit the more, the Apostle adds, that *it is in the sight of God of great price*; *i. e.* commanded and approved, and valued highly by him. From the Terms thus explain'd, it appears that the Thing the Apostle would say, is this; that the readiest way for Christian Women to recommend themselves to God, and to their Husbands, is to stock themselves with Virtues and good Qualities, with inward Accomplishments, such as are lasting, and will be of greatest Use and Service both here, and hereafter: This will appear from considering the Particulars injoin'd. *First*, the *hidden Man of the Heart* is to be adorn'd; *i. e.* the Mind.

The Mind, or Soul, is certainly the superiour Part, and better half of Man, as being that which is to guide and govern the other, and that which makes him a reasonable and religious Creature, the greatest Privilege and Honour he is capable of enjoying; and therefore certainly it deserves to be equally taken care of with the Body, and to be cultivated and improv'd. To be sollicitous for setting out *the Body* to advantage, and neglect the cultivating the Mind, is as if a Man should be at great Expence to build the Walls and Outside of

his House exceeding fine and stately, and shew no manner of Contrivance in the Inside of it ; regarding neither Beauty nor Convenience, nor intending any Furniture : This would be building for the Sight and Pleasure of People passing by, and wanting in the mean time an Habitation for himself. No doubt but every one would blame such a Man for neglecting that which is most properly *the House*, and ought to be most serviceable and convenient, for the sake of appearing well to Strangers, without any farther use. They are no wiser, nor less to be condemn'd, who spend their Time and Pains to appear externally fine and handsome, while the Mind within is suffered to lie waste, and wild, and unimprov'd. This is, indeed, to be wanting to their own Design and Aim, which is to make at least a good Shew ; for the Mind is the Principle of that Life and Motion, which is to give true Grace and Ornament to all their Actions : So that however well the Body may be framed by Nature, however fine and handsome it appear ; yet if the Mind be weak or filly, the first Motion shews it ; they can no sooner speak or stir, but they discover their Defects : They are like fine Statues, whilst they stand motionless and silent ; but when they shew they are alive, by Speech and Motion, they turn to awkward and irregular Figures, and lose their Comeliness immediately. This shews from whence the Beauty and the Grace of all exterior Gesture and Action proceeds, even from the Mind ; which, being in its self accomplish'd inwardly, does govern and direct the outward Carriage and Behaviour

viour of the Body, so as to make it handsome and becoming; so that, on this account, they who desire Favour, Acceptance, and Goodwill upon the score of Beauty, and a good Appearance, would never find their Labour lost, in adorning and improving of their Minds; it will both answer *that*, and a great many better Ends. The Heart or Mind of Man is, of it self, invisible and hidden, but so is God himself, and yet acts all: There is nothing discovers it self more, or sooner, in almost every Look and Gesture; so that no Care or Pains can be too great about this first Moyer, this mighty Spring, that communicates Life and Motion to all the rest.

Now the Mind (and here I speak of Men as well as Women) is to be improv'd by reading, thinking, and considering: People come to obtain good Qualities of the Mind, as they come by several Habits of the Body, by Use and Custom, and taking the proper Courses; so they come to Virtue and Religion, Wisdom and Discretion. They find that they are born with Powers and Faculties, different *from*, and superiour to those of other Creatures; they find that they can call to mind Things past, can consider Things present, and compare them one with another, and know their difference, and can determine what to do in time to come; they can inquire into their own Original, and find their Species has not been from all Eternity, but was in time created by a Being, existing necessarily it self, and voluntarily producing all Things else: They find this powerful Being has created them with so many

Wants, that they must needs depend upon him for Supply, which brings them, by Necessity, to worship him by *Prayer*; and yet hath crown'd them with so many Blessings and good Things, that natural **Gratitude** excites them to return him *Praise* and *Thanksgiving*: By which they unavoidably become Religious Creatures: They evidently see that God hath made them and design'd them to be so, by giving them Abilities and Powers of worshipping and serving him by *Prayer* and *Praise*, which are denied to all the Creatures of the World but them: For, finding it exceedingly just and reasonable, that a Being so beneficent and good, as to make them what they *are*, and to give them what they *have*, and moreover so powerful as to supply them with what they ask and want; that such a Being should be worshipped, honour'd and rever'd; and finding that no part of the Creation is capable, besides Mankind, of paying him this Worship and Religious Honour and Service, they cannot help concluding, that it lies on them to do it, and that it is one, and a mighty End of their Creation.

Thus, by a little easy thinking and considering, the Mind is fill'd with the Knowledge and Belief of God, the good and powerful Author and Creator of *it*, and all Things else; and fully convinc'd of the Necessity of worshipping and serving him, and that every Man and Woman in the World is design'd, by God, to be a Reasonable, and therefore a Religious Creature. This is the first Improvement of the Mind,

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The next Improvement of it, is, to the Exercise of Virtue. Without Religion, People never will be Virtuous; but when that good Foundation is once laid, the other follows easily. When we consider God in all his Excellencies and adorable Perfections, we find him *in himself* Eternal, and Almighty, and All-wise, and Pure and Holy; and, *with respect to Us*, and all his Creatures, Just and Righteous, Merciful and Good: And finding these to be the Perfections of the most perfect Being, we conclude, that the nearer we approach to these Perfections, the more perfect Creatures we our selves are, and the more lov'd and valued by this perfect Being. These are the two Bottoms, upon which the reasonable Desire of being Virtuous is originally founded, the Desire of being as excellent and perfect as our Nature is capable of, and our Abilities and Faculties are fitted to make us; and the Desire of rendring our selves most acceptable to God, who is the Rewarder of such as endeavour to be like him, and to please him. Upon these accounts, we are excited to be pure and holy, chaste and clean, and to preserve our selves spotless and undefiled; because we know this Sanctity and Innocence is greatly perfective of our Nature, keeps us in the Rank and Order God hath placed us; whereas Pollution and Impurity degrade and sink us below our selves, and set us on the square with Beasts that have no Understanding; and because we know this Virtue is altogether Heavenly, and of sweetest Odour before God, and will be recompenc'd by him, with the most

pure, sincere and undisturb'd Pleasures in Heaven, the Seat of Holiness it self. Upon these accounts, we are excited to be just and righteous to one another in all our Dealings; because we know it is so excellent and reasonable in it self, and so becoming us, and necessary for us; that when we depart from it, we do, in a manner, disclaim all farther Conversation with Mankind, not being willing to be govern'd by that everlasting Rule of Righteousness, of doing by others, as we would think reasonable, in the like Case, to be dealt withal our selves; but setting up our private Will and Humour in its stead, and studying our Conveniency and Pleasure only.

There is nothing more Natural, than that every one should consult his own Ease and Benefit in the first Place: But because that which belongs to *every* one, is really no Priviledge to *any* one; therefore every one must depart from his natural Right in some Cafes, and submit to Rules that are unexceptionable, and impartial, and favour all the World alike; amongst which, none is like that Rule of Reason and Religion above-mention'd, of dealing with others, as we would think it just we should be dealt withal our selves. There is no Body can escape seeing the Reasonableness of this Rule, and the Necessity of observing it, to the Security both of our *Being*, and of all we have; and the closer we keep to it, the better and more perfect we are in our selves, and the more useful to others; it gives us Pre-eminence and Superiority above all that neglect or

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overlook it: And furthermore, it gives us Favour with God; we resemble him very much, and are exceedingly approv'd of by him, in being just and righteous. He cannot indeed be otherwise, there being nothing to sway or move him from his Eternal Rectitude; but we are capable of being bias'd and corrupted by the Temptations both of Pleasure and Advantage; and that is the Foundation of our Merit (in its sober Sense); from thence arises our Ability of exercising Virtue, and the Opportunity of pleasing God, by preferring the being perfect in our Nature, as he intended us, and choosing rather to resemble him in his adorable Attribute of Just and Righteous, than to be pleas'd or profited, to his Dishonour, to our own Shame and Infamy, and to the Injury and Detriment of another: Upon these accounts it is, we are also excited to be compassionate and good; the shewing Pity, and the being kind to such as stand in need of our Assistance, is without doubt an Excellence, and great Perfection of our Nature. To pardon such as have offended us, and such as are not only liable to our Displeasure, but to our Punishment; to satisfy the hungry and the thirsty Souls, to cloath the Naked, visit the Sick and Prisoners, to comfort the Distress'd, to shelter the Weak and Innocent from the Power of insolent and great Men; to right the Injur'd and Oppress'd; in a word, to do good, in any kind, by Money, Counsel, and Assistance, by Favour or Authority, does naturally give Men an uncontroul'd, indisputable Power and Superiority: The Benefactor will be

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always uppermost, in the Praise, and Honour and Esteem of all that see and know, as well as of such as feel his Goodness: And hereto are we also mov'd, by considering, that, by doing good, and shewing Mercy, we resemble most our Heavenly Father, the Author and Giver of all good Things; and who bestows his Favours and his Blessings upon Men, with this Design, that they should also favour and do good to one another, and be themselves a Blessing to their Generation: And hath also promis'd, in a thousand Places, to recompence most amply such as prefer the being like to him, and doing all the good they can, to any little private Interest and Advantage of their own. There is, I think, no Question to be made, but that the Desire of being excellent and perfect, as we are capable of being, and the Desire of rendring our selves acceptable with God, and being favour'd by him here, and recompenc'd by him hereafter, are the Bottom and Foundation, upon which are built both the Desire, and Aim of being Virtuous; which was the second Thing to which the Mind was to attend, and be improv'd.

The *third* Improvement is, to Wisdom and Discretion; by which I understand, not only the Knowledge and Dexterity of being Religious, and exercising Virtue, with Advantage; but also an Ability of behaving themselves prudently and decently, on all Occasions, towards all People. It is possible to be both Religious and Virtuous, without Discretion; but neither Virtue nor Religion are credited or promoted by such People: They are good themselves; but their Good is not

not at all edifying, but rather hurtful: The Extravagance of their Zeal, the indiscreet Managery of their Devotion, the Indecency of their unusual Way and Gesture, are so far from promoting and inviting to Religion, that they rather give occasion of Pity to wise and good People, occasion of Offence and Trouble to weak and little-considering Folks, and occasion of Scorn and Mockage to light and profane one's; whereas a sober, unaffected, grave and discreet Deportment, both of Voice and Gesture in the publick Worship of God, is not only handsome and becoming in it self, but does insensibly and unaccountably provoke the Zeal of others to Imitation, and excites in them religious and devout Thoughts. And so it is with the Exercise of many Virtues, which lose much of their Power and Efficacy, for want of prudent and discreet Conduct. Thus one may lose some part of Respect to Justice, by seeing a Criminal treated inhumanly by either Judge or Council, or else by seeing him condemn'd with unseasonable Sarcasm, and in a vein of Lightness; and yet he shall deserve his Sentence, and be justly punish'd: But yet this Justice, thus administred, shall not have so good Effects upon the Minds of Spectators, as it would, if they discern'd such Gravity, such Calmness and becoming Evenness of Temper, as would shew neither Displeasure at the Offender's Person, nor Unconcernedness at his Offence; but a due Mixture of Zeal for the Security of Laws and Government, and of Humanity and Pity for the Miserable; for that is the Work and Businesse  
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of Discretion, to attain one's End, by Means not only just and righteous in themselves, but also well approv'd of, and best lik'd by others; to do what should, and must be done, but in the most becoming and most acceptable Manner.

Thus Clemency and Lenity may be so indiscreetly exercis'd to some Delinquents, with respect to the Manner, and so unseasonably, with respect to Time and Opportunity, that it shall rather seem a Disregard to Justice, and an Encouragement to Villany, than an Effect of Mercy and Compassion: And though Nature strongly inclines to Pity, and the Heart of Man yields easily to Acts of Mercy; yet when it is unseasonably and improperly shewn, it misses its Effect upon Men's Minds, and is neither approv'd nor prais'd.

It is so, I think, with every thing besides of Moment; where Prudence and Discretion do not sway and manage, the best of Virtues lose their Power and Efficacy: *i. e.* there is no Comparis'on betwixt the Good they do under a weak imprudent Management, and what they would do, if wisely and discreetly ordered: And if Discretion gives so great Advantage to Religion and Virtue, which are able of themselves to bear themselves out, it must be altogether necessary, in other Matters of less moment, to make them pass tolerably. The Truth of it is, without Discretion, neither Man nor Woman are conversible with, nor can they do any thing acceptably; it is that which gives Grace and Ornament to all they say and do, nor is it to be neglected in the smalleſt matters.

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It is hard to tell how it is to be acquir'd; but yet the want of it is sensibly discern'd on all Occasions, and appears in all the Follies and Absurdities that People commit. It is, as I said, a Dexterity and Ability of behaving one's self prudently and decently to all People on all Occasions; and it is so very useful and becoming every Body, that it ought to be studied much more carefully, than it usually is; since every Body is the better for it themselves, and the more serviceable to others. It may be, *Solomon* intended to describe it in part, when he tells us, *Eccles. 3. 1.* that *there is, to every thing, a Season, and a Time to every purpose under Heaven, a Time to break down, a Time to build up; a Time to weep, and a Time to laugh; a Time to get, and a Time to lose; a Time to keep, and a Time to cast away; a Time to keep silence, and a Time to speak:* That is, there is a Season and Time so proper and convenient for all Purposes, that they, who observe it not, will infallibly fall into great Absurdities, and commit a world of Errors and Indecencies; and they, who *do* observe these proper Times, shall shew themselves wise and considerate People, effect their Purposes much better, and live in more Esteem: *Regard to Time*, is undoubtedly a huge and necessary part of Discretion; but to that must also be joyned a due Regard to the Age, and Place, Person, and Quality of those we have to deal withal: The more general and extensive our Consideration and Observation of these Things are, the likelier is our Conduct to be prudent and discreet, the less Offences and Absurdities we shall commit,

commit, the more becoming and more useful will our Conversation and Behaviour be. And I insist the more on this, because 'tis probable, that more domestick Evils and Uneasinesses, that trouble Families, arise from want of Discretion, than want of either Virtue or Religion: And therefore when I was shewing how *the hidden Man of the Heart* was to be adorn'd; *i. e.* how the Mind was to be cultivated and improv'd; I made no doubt of adding Wisdom and Discretion to Virtue and Religion, as things necessary. For since the Apostle's Purpose is, that Christian Women should be good Wives, as well as virtuous and religious, and that it is their Duty to be one as well as the other, it must needs be convenient to urge the providing such Qualities, as are necessary to the discharging that Duty, next to Virtue and Religion: And since, without a competent Share of Prudence and Discretion, it is not possible to be either good Wives, or good Mothers, or good Mistresses of Families, it is to be no little part of their Concern to get as much of Prudence and Discretion as they can.

The next part of the Description of this Ornament of the Mind, is, *That it is to be in that which is not corruptible.* Whatever we can possibly adorn the Body with, is corruptible, and wears away with Time; and all the Beauty, and the Comeliness it gives, is short and perishing: Sometimes it happens, that these costly Ornaments, and gay Attire are so far from adding any Grace or Beauty to the Parties, that they are rather to their Disadvantage, and expose them to Derision, and deceive none but themselves: But granting they obtain

obtain their End, and render them as lovely as they would appear, how long does such a vain Delusion last, and what is the use of being so pleas'd? How may hundred Accidents, how many sore Diseases, quite destroy this Creature of the Imagination in a little time? And if it scape these Hazards, how strangely do a few Years disguise the fairest Face, so that an absent Friend shall hardly know it when he comes again? Sure so fantastick, useleſs, and so perishing a thing as this, cannot be worth the Care, and Pains, and Cost, that People are at about it; the Praise and Pleasure of it, whilst it lasts, is inconsiderable and empty; and when 'tis gone (as it is quickly gone) it leaves either Shame or Grief, or both, to such as have over-rated it whilst they had it, and valued themselves upon that weak account: They are punished in some proportion to the vain Esteem they held themselves in.

But now, the *Mind*, when that is cultivated and improv'd, answers sufficiently for all the Care, and Time, and Pains, that are bestow'd upon it; the Ornaments of *that*, are such as answer to their End; they represent it always beautiful and lovely, and to all People. It does not depend upon the Humour or the Fancy, whether Religion, Virtue and Discretion, shall find Favour and Acceptance; for they will always find it, and their Force is irresistible: Whilst Men have Reason and Understanding, they cannot help approving and desiring those Accomplishments of the Soul; nay, we may trust them with their *Passions* also in this case; for tho' their own Practice be against them,

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(guided by their inordinate Desires) yet is their secret Judgment always on the side of Religion, Virtue, and Discretion ; and they always like them in others, how much soever they neglect them in themselves : The loosest People in the World would have their Mothers and their Wives, their Daughters and their Sisters, and all their Relations, religious, virtuous and discreet, rather than beautiful ; those whom they love the best, they would have best provided ; and therefore 'tis the settled Judgment of Mankind, that these are the best, the truest, and most lasting Ornaments of Women. 'Tis true, that when Beauty also meets, and joins with these good Qualities, they give a mutual Lustre to each other, and set each other off, to great advantage : *This adds a Grace and Comeliness to them*, and they *present the greatest Beauty yet more beautiful* ; but *these are Ornaments when that is gone*, and where it never was ; these are *incorruptible*, and last as long as the Mind itself, which they adorn and beautify. These are of great Use and Service ; these deserve the greatest Praise and Honour, and these will stand them in stead, when all things else are gone and fail them. All Beauty, and external Ornaments are of very little Use and Service, either to such as have them, or such as only look on : Whereas Religion, Virtue, and Discretion are of general Use and Benefit ; they are serviceable to every one ; they do not only make those, who possess them, good ; but they make them *do good to all that are concern'd*, or have to deal with them. Beauty and Wit, and Birth and Quality,

lity, and fine Attire attract the Eyes and Admiration of People: But 'tis another sort of Admiration that is rais'd by Virtue and Religion; 'tis always attended with Esteem, and secret Veneration: The one is the transient Wonder of a fine Sight, something that glisters, and dazzles the Eyes, and works a little on the Fancy, and then gives way to other Novelties, that still occasion the like Wonder. The other is the standing Admiration of some great and noble Work of Nature; which, by its Beauty, and its Usefulness, begets Esteem and Liking in the Mind immediately, and which continue there, and are excited every time the Object, or Idea of it, rises or appears. There is therefore no comparison betwixt the Usefulness of Beauty, and the Bodies Ornaments, and those good Qualities and Graces that are the Ornaments and Beauties of the Soul; and no comparison betwixt the Praises, Honour and Esteem, that all good, wise, and sober People give and have for virtuous and religious Women, and that short Gaze and Compliment, that vain and idle Spirits pay to Beauty and fine Habits. *Favour, saith one that knew, is deceitful, and Beauty is vain; but a Woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be prais'd.* Favour and Beauty have their Praise, vain and deceitful as they are; but it is also vain, and commonly deceitful; *i. e.* bestowed with purpose of ensnaring and corrupting; but they, who fear the Lord in Wisdom and Virtue, are prais'd in earnest, and honour'd and esteem'd with all Sincerity.

The Choice then of these different Ornaments and Beauties is not difficult ; the one are useless, the other good and serviceable ; the one are lov'd, and had in Veneration and Esteem by all good People, the other valued, for a time, by young and giddy Fancies.

But, *lastly*, and especially, these Ornaments and Beauties of the Mind will stand them in good stead, when every thing besides will fail them, and be gone. The Favour and Affection, which are only built upon good Features, Colour, Shape, or Dress and Ornament, must necessarily fall to the Ground, when these decay and die ; and therefore this Affection depends upon Diseases, Accidents and Humour, for its Life and Being : Now this is not sufficient to secure the Peace and Happiness of married Women ; for, not having it in their Power to secure themselves against Diseases, Accidents, and change of Humour, the Affection, that is to make and keep them happy, is exceeding precarious, and dependent, and uncertain : And therefore, since it is sure and certain, that they shall stand in need of such Affection and Good-will, as is to keep them easy and contented all their Lives long, and longer much than they can hold their Beauty and their Comeliness ; they are oblig'd, in common Prudence, to secure the Affection of their Husbands, by adorning themselves with such good Qualities, as will render them for ever acceptable to wise and sober Men, even when the Ruins of their Beauty are defac'd ; and those are Godliness, and Virtue, and Discretion : Where these appear, there will be

be little want of any thing besides ; or if there be, these will excuse it, or supply it : Where Men discern the Fear of God, and a good Sense of Religion prevailing in their Minds, and influencing them to the Exercise of all the Virtues that are proper to them, according to their Opportunities and Abilities ; and see them manage their Affairs with Care and Wisdom, and Discretion, and discharge the Duties of every Relation, whether Mother, Wife, or Mistres of a Family, with Diligence and Prudence ; they will despise the Entertainments of a light and idle Fancy, with respect to these most solid, useful, and most lasting Accomplishments of Mind : Such Qualities as these will give them Grace and Comeliness throughout, and render them most lovely in the Eyes of all that know them ; and (which is infinitely more) will give them Grace and Favour in the Sight of God. And this is that which they must principally mind ; for what would it avail them to be amiable to all the World, if under God's Displeasure ?

The time will come, shortly perhaps to some, and not long hence to most, when they, who have mispent their Life in these, or other idle and unprofitable Exercises, though not directly sinful, yet have thereby neglected to improve their better Part, to dress up, and adorn their Souls, and cloath themselves with Virtues and good Works, shall see the Folly of their Choice, and find how naked and defenceleſs they shall stand before the Throne of God, when they must give account how they have past their Lives in this World. And they, who have been holy and religious, con-

stant and fervent in their Prayers and Praises, frequent in reading of the Scriptures and good Books, and meditating on the Promises and Threats they find therein ; and who have all along been careful to be rich in good Works, busied in the Exercise of Virtue, and constantly doing the several Duties of their Life ; shall find the Advantage also of having thus improv'd their Time, their Talents and Abilities ; for they shall see that this was trimming of their Lamps, and living in a Readiness and Expectation of the Bridegroom's calling them : This was *the adorning of the hidden Man of the Heart, in that which was not corruptible* ; and this, they shall soon find, *is in the sight of God of great price.* What is also to be understood by *the Ornament of a meek and quiet Spirit*, here particularly nam'd, will deserve to be consider'd by itself, in the following Discourse.

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## *D I S C O U R S E XI.*

I P E T E R III. V E R S E 4.

*But let it be the hidden Man of the Heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the Ornament of a meek and quiet Spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.*

**S**T. Peter having told the Women, in general, what kind of Ornaments would best become them, *the adorning the hidden Man of the Heart, in that which is not corruptible* ; i.e. the improving of their Minds in Religion, Virtue and Discretion, which

which will recommend them to the Favour both of God, and wise and good Men, and will last when all other Ornaments corrupt and perish ; he comes to one particular Ornament, even *that of a meek and quiet Spirit, which, he tells them, is in the sight of God of great price.* We have therefore, in the *First place*, to see what is meant by a meek and quiet Spirit : And, *Secondly*, to shew, how *ornamental* and becoming it is : And, *Thirdly*, upon what account it is *in the sight of God a great price.* *First*, What is meant by *a meek and quiet Spirit.* By these Words we easily and naturally understand a soft and gentle Temper, a peaceful, calm, and patient Mind, oppos'd to Anger, Pride and Fierceness, Noisiness, Impatience, and a restless Discontent. This kind of Temper is the greatest Happiness that can befall any one : It is that which keeps them easy themselves, and makes them so to all the World about them. Most of the Troubles and Misfortunes that befall Men, are more or less uneasy and afflicting, as their Minds are more or less prepar'd to entertain them ; so we see the same Evil, that oppresses and overwhelms one Man, makes very little Impression upon another. One Man grows loud and passionate upon the least Occasion ; a Look of Slight, a doubtful or an angry Word sets him on fire immediately ; whilst another bears the most apparent Insults, and heaviest Injuries, with great Evenness and Patience. One Man is calm and easy under great Losses, whilst another storms and rages under little Disappointments : So that a *meek and quiet Spirit* does most evidently give the Advantage to such

as have it, and delivers them from many Sufferings to which the fierce and angry, hasty and impatient People are subject ; and is therefore, in it-self, the most desirable Temper that can be, in a Life, that is the Scene of so much certain Misery and Trouble.

But since the good Qualities we are exhorted to possess ourselves of, and the Things we are commanded to do, must needs be in our Power to get and do ; and that a gentle Temper, a meek and quiet Spirit, are not Things that we can make or get of ourselves, but such as God gives us, and we bring into the World with us, how can a Man or Woman be exhorted to adorn themselves with *a meek and quiet Spirit* ? It is what every one desires, and every one would have, if he could get it. In answer to this, it must be acknowledg'd, that the Seeds and Principles of all our Passions and Humours are born into the World with us ; and that there is generally a Predominancy of some one Humour, that from our Infancy bears sway above the rest, and shews itself conspicuously, and which peculiarly marks out, and denominates a Man *so temper'd* : And 'tis sure, this mechanical Propensity of Nature is not by any Care or Pains, by any Art or Diligence, to be extinguish'd quite, or altogether chang'd in Education : There will be evermore a Tendency and Bias to that side, as all Men feel. But 'tis as sure, that Care, and Pains, and Art, and Diligence, and Time, and Use, and Custom, and good Consideration will go a very great way to the changing and correcting any Temper whatsoever ; and Use, we say,

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(with Reason enough) is a second Nature ; and we see that People, by habituating themselves, do almost become any thing they will. And therefore, though People have it not in their Power to change their Tempers altogether, yet they always have it in their Power to change them as far as God requires them to do it, *i.e.* as far as he enables them by Reason, and Use, to change them, and that is, certainly, to prevent all mischievous and evil Effects that flow from them : Thus *St. Peter* exhorts the Women to adorn themselves with a meek and quiet Spirit ; that is, not to put off their natural Temper, and put on a new one presently, but so to govern themselves, as to be meek and quiet upon all Occasions ; that, by Reason, and Consideration, they restrain themselves from falling into Bitterness, Impatience, Mutiny, and Clamour.

It cannot be, but that, in the course of their Lives, and the Management of their domestick Concerns, a great many cross perverse Accidents must happen, and they must meet with many Disappointments, many Provocations, and severe Trials ; and if they do not arm themselves against them, with a patient and a prudent Spirit, their Sufferings will be almost doubled on their Heads. Now they are not called upon, to be insensible and stupid under what befalls them ; but so to prepare and behave themselves, that they may do nothing that misbecomes them : Herein they are to exercise their Reason and best Abilities : These are the Proofs of their Obedience, Patience, and Discretion,

It would be of use to them, to consider with themselves, that Matters are seldom mended with them by all the Noise and Contention that is rais'd ; they are oft-times made worse, but very seldom better ; neither the Folly nor Perverseness of Men are cur'd, nor any mischievous unlucky Accidents remedied, by Fury and Impatience : But the Things, which, of themselves, would have done but little hurt, do, by an indiscreet and hasty Management, become the occasions of great Mischief : Sometimes, even for a small and inconsiderable matter, they fall into such excess of Anger and Disorder, that they thereby hazard all the Peace and Quiet of their Lives, even the Affection of their Husbands, of which they ought to be most tender, knowing their Happiness must end, when that is alienated and lost from them. There are few People in the World that are upon the square, and independent one upon another, that can compare the Provocations and Occasions of their Anger and Contention, with the Events and Consequences, with any tolerable Rest and Satisfaction, they find them so unequal and unreasonable, as well as mischievous ; and much less comfortably can People, so near related, reflect on their Contentions with their Partners and Superiours, to whom they owe Silence at least, and some Submission. But generally, the Event declares that nothing could be more their Wisdom and their Interest, than a meek and quiet Spirit : It would be better much, if they would let their Reason and Consideration teach them beforehand,

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(as it might) what the Event will shew them afterwards, too late; for the Learning People get by such Experiences, is commonly too dearly paid for; for they only find, that they have weakly lost, what they can hardly again recover.

When St. Peter has done with his general Exhortation to the Wives, to adorn themselves with good Qualities, and in particular with a meek and quiet Spirit; he afterwards enforces his Advice, with telling them, *that after this manner, in the old Time, the Holy Women, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in Subjection to their own Husbands: Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him Lord.* From whence we may reasonably enough conclude, that a meek and quiet Spirit will easily infer, the being in Subjection to their Husbands, the obeying them in things reasonable, and the using civil and respectful Terms to them, as *Sarah*, their great Example, us'd to *Abraham*. And *Sarah* indeed had occasion, upon several accounts, to exercise a great deal of Patience and Submission; she was to leave her native Country, and Relations, and follow her Husband to a strange Land: It did not appear his Interest, and, by a disputatious and complaining Woman, might easily have been adjudg'd an unreasonable Humour, and unaccountable Extravagance, and not to be complied with, to leave a place where they were easy, settled, and in great Prosperity, to go they knew not whither, upon pretence of I know not what divine Appearance, Dream, or Vision; for she had only *Abraham's Word to warrant it.* When People

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are not dispos'd to such Submission, as becomes them, to the Will of their Superiours, they are full of Scruples and Objections, and making Arguments of every thing; whilst they, who understand, and are resolv'd to do their Duty, obey without Dispute, and comply with Calmness and great Readiness, even under Doubt, Suspicion, and Uncertainty of what will follow.

There may be many Cases, where a nice and curious Search after Causes and Reasons for such and such Proceedings, may not be half so useful, commendable and convenient, as an implicit Trust, and ready Compliance: No doubt but *Sarah* had this Confidence in *Abraham*, and therefore readily forsook her Country, and her Kindred, and her Father's House, to follow *him* into a Land God was to shew him. Another Instance of her mighty Patience and Submission, was the yielding up her only Son to the Disposal of his Father, who was commanded, and resolv'd to offer him up a Sacrifice; not yielding him without the greatest Sorrow and Reluctance in the World, but yielding him, notwithstanding them. The Child of so many Promises on God's part, and so much Expectation and Desire on her's, and the only Child of her old Age, must needs be dear beyond Expression: And where is the Mother in the World, that would believe her Husband had receiv'd so hard and strange a Command from God, as to offer up an innocent and only Son, or that would yield it to him, were she so perswaded? *Abraham* indeed accounted God was able to raise him up, even from

from the Dead; and therefore might offer him up with more Content, and less Reluctance, because he knew that God had promis'd, that *in Isaac should his Seed be call'd*; and therefore *Isaac* must be rais'd again, though from the Dead, to make the Promise good: But whether this was *Sarah's* Faith, does not appear; her Heart, most probably, was not supported by such Hope, but left to struggle with those Difficulties, that tender Mothers only can be sensible of, on such Occasions.

The insolent Behaviour of her Maid, under the Favour of her Husband, might have afforded her another opportunity of exercising her Patience, and shewing a meek and quiet Spirit; but she was not quite so exemplary there, but us'd her cruelly and hardly, and drove her to extremity; which was not of a piece with that unusual part that she had play'd, in offering up her Servant to her Husband's Bed. But I intend to make no other use of her Example in this Case, than to take occasion from it, to consider how a Woman is oblig'd to behave her self, when she is sure her Husband wanders from her Bed, (a Case that happens much too commonly) how far she is concern'd to exercise a meek and quiet Spirit, on such Falshood and ill Usage. Some of the ancient Christians, and of the most considerable, were of the Opinion, that it was utterly unlawful for either a Man or Woman to cohabit with each other, notoriously false. It is indeed said, *Deut. 24. 4.* that *if a Man put away his Wife, he may not take her again, after she is defiled*: And if this

this Reason hold good, it will follow as well, that if she have committed Adultery, she may not be entertained; because, in this Case, she is much more defiled, than one divorc'd is by a second Marriage. But in answer to this, it is to be observ'd, that when it pleases God to give a Reason for his Commands, the Commands can oblige no farther, than the Reason carries them, any other People, but those to whom the Commands are particularly given: This Command would have oblig'd the *Jews*, without the Reason annexed to it; but this Command obliges no one else any farther than this Reason will oblige them, which is very little or nothing: It is very visible that the Reason obliges no one without the Command, and therefore only those to whom the Command is given, and therefore *Jews* alone were tied by it: But neither is it the same Case, for a Man to keep a false Adulteress without ever parting from her, and to take her to Wife again, after she has been once divorc'd and married to another, from whom she is again freed, either by Death, or by Divorce. Neither is that Inference good, that a Man must not live and cohabit with an Adulteress Wife, because she was adjudg'd by the Law to be ston'd to Death. For tho', if she were legally convicted of Adultery, she was to die; yet the Husband was not at all oblig'd to prosecute her, or to accuse her: He was at liberty to conceal her Shame, and to forgive her Trespals, if he pleas'd; or he might put her away privately, as *Joseph* intended to do with the most pure and spotless Virgin

Virgin Mother. As for the Folly, Scandal, or Indecency of so cohabiting together, they are Considerations that may make it accidentally, and sometimes unlawful so to live together: But there is no divine Command, nor any natural Turpitude or Uncleanness in it, that may shew it unlawful for the faithful and innocent Party still to continue with the false and guilty one. It must needs be lawful for the innocent and ~~injurd~~, to be patient and forgive, to love and live with, if they can or will, those that have wrong'd them. And if this be true of Men, with respect to faithles Women, it is certainly true of Women, with respect to false adulterous Husbands; they are undoubtedly at liberty, by the Laws of God, to live and cohabit with them: But as they are at liberty to do this if they will, so are they at liberty, by the Reason of God's Law, to forbear all Commerce with them; the Band that tied them is dissolv'd and broken; and the Husband, without her Consent, has in that kind no farther right to her. The innocent Wife is neither bound to forsake her adulterous Husband, nor bound so to continue with him; he hath set her free, and she is at her liberty to do as she will. But yet this Liberty is neither to be humoursome nor lasting; if she again cohabit with her Husband, and live with him as she was wont, she is presum'd to have forgiven his Sin, and to have agreed with him; his former Trespafs will not be a just Occasion for her leaving him, when she thinks fit; but new Transgressions give her new liberty: She may endure his Falshood as long as she pleases,

pleases, but she is not oblig'd to endure it for ever. Here therefore is room for her Religion and Discretion to shew themselves: She is undoubtedly oblig'd to procure the Conversion of her Husband from his evil Ways, by all the Methods she can take, likely and apt to compass it; but she is not oblig'd *to hurt herself*, for his sake. If, by her soft and gentle Admonitions, or if by sharp and quick Reproaches, she can bring him to a Sense of his ungrateful and injurious Usage, and occasion his Repentance and Amendment, they will be either of them well bestowed; and she will be oblig'd to try them. If it be probable, that the Reproofs of wise and sober People, either spiritual Guides or grave Relations, will prevail to his Conversion, she must endeavour it, with all the Secrecy and Tenderness imaginable; she must not suffer Sin, when she can easily remove it; and Love and true Concern will make her very diligent, and very willing to effect so good a Work. But if she be as probably as sur'd, that the Man is of churlish *Nabal's* Humour (as too many Husbands are) such a Son of *Belial*, that he cannot be spoken to; but the very Discovery of his wicked Folly will make him impudent and shameless, and harden him in his Sin; or if it will, in likelihood, provoke him to use her cruelly, as some of brutal Tempers are inclin'd to do, and cause her to live unhappily the rest of her Time with him, she is not, in that Case, oblig'd to endeavour to reclaim him; for no Man is presum'd so ignorant of his Duty, as not to know he must not violate the Marriage Bed, and therefore

fore there's no need of her teaching him that: And since it is the Hope alone of reclaiming a wandring Husband, that can make such an Attempt reasonable and convenient, and that such Hope is vain in the before-suppoſed Cases, there lies no Obligation on the Woman to attempt it: She is then at liberty to consult her Peace and Quiet, her Ease and Happiness in the best manner she can think on. If she take care that her Connivance, or dissembled Ignorance, her Compliance and Cohabitation, her Silence, or her Patience and Submission; if she take care that none of these give any Countenance or Encouragement to her unkind and wicked Partner, to continue on and prosecute his unlawful Love, she is without Blame; she is not oblig'd to make herself miserable by any Act of her own, but to live as easily as she can in that Condition.

The Connivance of a Wife at the stolen Pleasures of her Husband, will hardly be look'd upon as countenancing Sin, or any other than an Act of strong Necessity, and to avoid some greater Evil: The Presumption will be always on their side, that they will never easily endure a Rival in the Affection of their Husbands, if they could remove her. *Sarah*, indeed, before the Birth of *Isaac*, out of a strong Desire of seeing the Child born, that was promis'd to *Abraham* with so great Prospect of Felicity and Blessing, gave him her Handmaid *Hagar*; but in this she has been almost singular; and of this, it seems, she soon herself repented, and return'd to the true Wife again. In a word, a Wife may very innocently permit what she can-  
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not prevent or hinder ; and, by such Permission, keep Possession of her Rights, and defend herself from Wrongs : She may endure her Husband's open Falshood and Adultery, without any Sin or Blame on her part, if she cannot hinder him ; and, by this Sufferance and Compliance, (not consenting or agreeing to his Sin) may lawfully enjoy all the Ease and Advantage such Cohabitation can afford her, and avoid all the Mischiefs and Afflictions that would attend and follow a Separation : Neither Religion nor Discretion prohibit an innocent and virtuous Woman, the living with a false and wicked Husband.

And when the Women find themselves in such Condition, that Separation would undo them quite, or make them at least, extreamly, miserable (which is the Case of most) as they have truly all the need imaginable of *a meek and quiet Spirit*, so nothing in the World can stand them in better stead. When Injuries so quick as this, and Provocations of this Nature fall upon a violent and hasty Disposition ; they generally make an everlasting Breach, cut off all hope of Reconcilement, and stop the Way, sometimes, to true Repentance, which mild and prudent Management might have effected. Nothing so wins upon the obstinate, and melts the firmest, most obdurate Minds, like soft and gentle Usage ; even Silence, when it shews Submission, and not Sullenness, is apter to perswade, than angry Arguments produc'd in opposition. All Men love Power and Superiority, and a meek and quiet Spirit seems to yield it to them, even when it takes it from them, and dis-

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arms them : Dispute begets Dispute, and Opposition Opposition ; but Silence and Submission vanquish without Fighting or Resistance. There is an unaccountable Force in Meekness, Patience, and Forbearance ; they cut off all Reply, remove all Matter of Contention, and leave Men to consider with themselves the Injuries they have done : They excite in Men a Sense of Shame, and Gratitude, and Honour, and furnish them with all the Arguments that can be thought upon, and urge them in the Favour of the Innocent. There is nothing, in a word, so likely to prevail upon a false Husband, as a meek and quiet Spirit, a patient and discreet Submission under those heavy Injuries. And if it is so likely to succeed in this great Matter, it will certainly be of huge use in all the less Concerns of Life : There is, indeed, no living for a Wife, without a tolerable Portion of this meek and quiet Spirit. The Folly, and the Wickedness of Men, and the perverse unlucky Accidents, that are so frequent in the Course of Affairs, do furnish so many Occasions for the Exercise of Patience and Submission, that she can never think to live with any Peace or Comfort, that will not prepare herself against them.

St. Peter uses, moreover, the Example of *Sarah*, in calling her Husband *Lord*, to teach the Women to profess their Subjection, and acknowledge the Superiority of their Husbands : The using civil and respectful Terms, is what becomes all People, and Wives especially ; but what they are, depends upon Custom and Agreement, and of themselves they are of little value ; where Love and

true Respect do not produce them, they are only decent and of good Example: And because that Anger and Impatience do usually occasion hard Terms and unbecoming Language, her giving of her Husband soft respectful Titles, may intimate her to be of a meek and quiet Spirit which keeps People, we see, within the Bounds of Decency, and always gives good Words, there being hardly any surer Sign of any one's loosing their Temper, than their flying out into Passion, and giving hard Language.

These are some of the Uses that Wives may make of Sarah's Example: And to dispose them to the getting a meek and quiet Spirit the sooner, the Apostle says it is *an Ornament*; which is the next Thing to be consider'd, in a word or two. The Use of Ornaments is to set the Wearer off to advantage, and recommend them to the Favour and Esteem of such as see them; it is something that becomes them in the Judgment of other People: And in all these Senses a meek and quiet Spirit is a great Ornament to Wives; it sets them off to great advantage, and recommends them to the Favour and Esteem of all that know them, and converse with them, and does most sensibly engage the Affections of their Husbands; and it is that which becomes them in the Opinion of all wise and good and virtuous People; it is truly a Beauty of the Mind, and pleases all that see it.

It is often seen, that all the things, that Wives intend for Ornaments, are ill-plac'd, and give them neither Grace nor Comeliness, whether they be of Gold, or Silver, or Embroideries, or other things,

things, never so rare or costly : Whereas this good and gentle Temper, this meek and quiet Spirit, never fails of giving Favour and Acceptance ; it pleases People when they are wise and sober, grave and thoughtful, and consider best ; it captivates the Judgment : Whereas the rest depend upon a light and giddy Fancy.

But, *lastly*, and to crown all, *it is in the sight of God of great price.* 'Tis Costliness, it seems, that makes all outward Ornaments esteem'd and valued ; and if they are of great price, they think them more becoming, and find themselves the more respected for them : By a train of idle Consequences, Folks come to make these vain Conclusions ; and 'tis better to yield them than dispute them : The Apostle seems inclin'd to make good use of such a Fancy, and hopes to recommend a meek and quiet Spirit, by telling them that it is *of great price*, highly esteem'd by God : And certainly he is the wisest and fittest Judge of what is proper and becoming all his Creatures ; and if his Creatures understand their Interest, they will, of all things in the World, endeavour to recommend themselves to his Good-loving and Esteem. The Beauty and the Comeliness, that all the Cost and Ornaments in Nature can afford, are of no value when the Show is over : There has been a great deal of Noise and Hurry, Trouble and great Confusion, to little purpose : The Pleasure results from the Gaze and Talk of idle, wanton People, whom they shall hardly see again ; who half of them, perhaps, dislike, what the other half approve and praise ; and if a Fit of Sickness comes,

or a few Years steal on their Heads, then all the rest are lost. The Praise of Men, on such accounts, is but a poor Temptation, and Reward, for such Sollicitude and Care as many of that Sex bestow on outward Ornaments. Half of it, taken in recommending themselves to God by Virtues and good Qualities, would do it most effectually, and keep them for ever in his Favour.

But upon what account is it, that a meek and quiet Spirit should be of great price in the sight of God? *First*, Because it is acting according to Reason: And, *Secondly*, because it is obeying God's Commands. *First*, It is acting according to Reason: Reason is the Guide that God hath given to every Man to conduct him in his Course of Living; and when they act according to good Reason, they do as they should; they answer to the End of their Creation, and that is always pleasing to the great Creator; he sees the Work of his Hands prosper. Now to be meek and quiet under Injuries, and hard Usage, that is not otherwise to be avoided or removed, is acting with Reason; 'tis making the best of a bad Business, endeavouring to be easy under their Sufferings; 'tis doing what People would wish to do, even when they find they cannot: For all Afflictions (we have seen before) are more or less afflicting, as the Mind is more or less prepar'd to bear them: And therefore Injuries and Crosses, and hard Usage, are not so oppressive to meek and quiet Spirits, as they are to violent and furious Tempers; and therefore, 'tis the wisest and most reasonable thing that Folks can do, to be as calm

calm and gentle as they can, to break the Force of their Misfortunes by Patience and Submission. The *wild* Birds beat themselves almost to pieces, in the same Cage, where *tame* ones sit and sing; and yet the Prison is the same, one is as near to Liberty as t'other. The Wives, that have the hardest Fortune, seldom mend it by Contention, Clamour and Impatience; they often lay new Miseries upon themselves by such a Management; whereas a gentle soft Forbearance gives at least no new Provocation to farther ill Usage, and bears the old with less Difficulty: It is the Wisdom of every Wife to get this meek and quiet Spirit, in order to her Ease and Happiness; and upon that account it is also commanded them by God: For God, designing nothing but the Happiness of all his Creatures, commands them every thing that may procure it; and every thing that he commands, has certainly some Tendency that way, and would, if rightly pursued, conduce to it: This is plain of a meek and quiet Spirit, As the Affairs of this World are manag'd, and as Men govern themselves, there will be so many accidental and design'd Provocations to Anger and Impatience, that People would be extreamly miserable, if God did not injoin them, by all means, to fit their Minds against them, to bear them quietly and meekly when they came: And therefore 'tis in Kindness to us, that he lays these Laws and Commands upon us: And because he is delighted in our Benefit, and Ease and Happiness, therefore he is delighted with our Compliance and Obedience; and therefore a meek and

quiet Spirit is, in his sight, of great price : The happier our Obedience to him makes us, the more delighted God is with it ; it is by so much the more acceptable to him.

But neither does his Goodness and Benignity end *here* ; his Aim is also our eternal Good ; the happier our Obedience to his Commands makes us in this World, the happier it will also make us in the World to come. The Commands that carry their Reward with them, whilst we obey them here, have also a Reward annex'd by Promise to them, in the other Life : And therefore there is still the more Encouragement to set about our Duty in these Matters. A meek and quiet Spirit does not only pay itself better than most good Qualities besides, whilst it is exercis'd, but since it is in the sight of God of great price, it will undoubtedly be amply recompenc'd with everlasting Peace and Rest, and Quiet in the World to come.

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## DISCOURSE XII.

COLOSSIANS III. VERSE 19.

*Husbands Love your Wives, and be not  
Bitter against them.*

I Have shewed you already, in general, that all Duties and Obligations to Love and Service, of any sort, arise either from the Sense and Remembrance of Benefits and Favours past, and already receiv'd; or from the Hope and reasonable Expectation of Benefits and Favours to come, and to be receiv'd; and that this is the Foundation and Bottom of our Obligation to pray to, or to praise even God himself, for it is for Blessings only that we praise and pray to him: So that the great Creator has no other Right or Title to the Love, or Honour, Worship, or the Service of his Creature, than what his Benefits or Favours, bestowed and promis'd, give him: It is for our Creation, Preservation, and all the Blessings of this Life, and for the Hopes and Promises of another, that we are bound to bless and worship God. Our Duty to him is not founded on his inward Excellence, his glorious and adorable Perfections; but on his Mercy and Benignity, his Goodness and his Loving-kindness shewn on all Occasions to us, and evermore expected by us: *We love God, because he first loved us, and gave his only begotten Son for us.*

And if this be the Case of the Relation betwixt the Creator and his Creature, it is certainly more so in the Relations one Creature has to another. It is impossible for one of *them* to have any Obligation to another, either to shew Love or to do Service, but it must arise either from Gratitude and Thankfulness for something good receiv'd, or from the Hope and Prospect of something good to be receiv'd. All Duties of Mankind do therefore mutually infer one another: The Duty of a Subject to his Prince does certainly infer the Prince's Duty to his Subject, something *i. e.* he owes his Subject, call it what, or how you will; he must lay some Obligation or other *on* him, or he can ask no Duty from him; it is for the sake of what one gives, that the other also is oblig'd to give. Thus I have shewn it is in the Relation of Parent and Child; there is an Obligation laid by one, as the Foundation of the other's Duty; and though these Duties are made Duties by Command of God, yet they are truly Duties, in Nature and Reason, antecedently to any Laws or Commands of God: They are therefore inforc'd by God's Commands, because they are in themselves so reasonable and fit, and so necessary to be observ'd for the good and quiet of Mankind. God has laid no Obligations on any one to love and serve another, but for the sake of something equivalent to be receiv'd at the other's hands, all Things consider'd and put together. And indeed, there is no Relation commanded by God to discharge its Duty to its Correlative, but has its Correlative commanded

manded to discharge its Duty on the other hand: Princes are as much oblig'd to discharge their Office to Subjects, as Subjects are to their Princes; and Parents are oblig'd as certainly to do their part and office to their Children, as Children to their Parents: The Duty of Princes and Parents is different from the Duty of Children and Subjects, no doubt; but the Duty of one is as much a Duty, as is that of the other. And since each Party is by Nature and Reason equally oblig'd to perform its Duty, and equally commanded by God so to do; 'tis not easy to see, how one side comes to look for and expect the Performance of Duty from the other, without discharging its own part: But yet this is the Case most commonly of that side, that accounts it self, and is with Reason enough accounted by others, the *Superiour* side. Thus Princes, Parents, Masters, and Governours remember only the Reasons, and Commands, that give them Power and Authority, and that exact Obedience, Love and Service to them; without remembering the Reason and Commands that oblige themselves to discharge their several Obligations to their Subjects, Children, and their Servants, the very Reason and Bottom of the others Duty; and oftentimes dispence with themselves against both Reason and Command, yet think it very hard and unjust, that their Correlatives should, at any time, relax of their Performance of their several Duties. And thus it is too frequently with many Husbands, who are full of Dominion, morosely Imperious, and sometimes Cruel and Tyrannical;

nical; ever rememb'ring the Submission, Duty, Honour and Obedience, that their Wives are tied by Reason and God's Command to pay them; but seldom or never thinking of what they owe, themselves, to those their Wives, by the same Reason and God's Commands. St. *Paul* here makes no difference; but having said, in Verse 18. *Wives Submit yourselves to your own Husbands, as is fit in the Lord;* he adds immediately in Ver. 19. in the Words of the Text, *Husbands Love your Wives, and be not Bitter against them.* Leaving it as much a Duty on the Husbands to *Love their Wives,* as on the Wives to *Submit themselves to their own Husbands:* And indeed it is so well and wisely ordered by God Almighty, that whosoever obeys his Commands, in discharging the Duty of his Relation, does thereby make the surest and the readiest Way to the receiving what is due to him from his Correlative. A good Prince is the most likely to find good and obedient Subjects; and good obedient Subjects will most likely engage a Prince to shew himself good and affectionate, and careful of his Subjects: And so the good and careful Parents and Masters are the most likely to make or find the most obedient, diligent and faithful Children and Servants: And dutiful obedient Children are the most likely to secure the Care and Affection of Parents to them; and the most diligent and honest Servants are the most likely to find their Masters kindest, and most careful of them; so that, by discharging every one his Duty, the World in general would be happy, and each particular be

be easy in their Station and Relation. And this is also the bottom of that common Saying, which is also true and reasonable, that good Husbands make good Wives, and good Wives good Husbands; *i. e.* there is nothing so likely to engage one Partner to perform *his* Duty, as the other's performing *his*. There is no readier way for Husbands to have good Wives, affectionate, obedient, careful and faithful, than by following the Dictates of Reason, as well as the Commands of God, *to Love them, and not be Bitter against them.* We have therefore, in the first Place, to see, what is understood by *Husbands Loving their Wives*; and, in the second, what it is, *not to be Bitter against them.*

There is a Love peculiar to every Relation, that a Man can stand in by Nature, or can contract by Choice, and it is truly distinct from every other Affection. Thus there is a Love of Honour and Esteem due to Virtue, Excellence and Perfection; and this is commonly the Love we pay to Princes, great and brave People of all sorts, and commonly our Superiors. There is also a Love of Friendship due to Merit and good Qualities, either real or imagined, generally paid to our Equals. There is also a Love of natural Relations, different from the rest, and which grows up with us, insensibly, from our Infancy. And the mutual Love of Marriage is distinct from all the rest; and therefore when People are call'd upon *to Love*, they are called upon to pay that Affection that is peculiar to the Relation they stand in to such a Party. Now the Love of

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Husbands is chiefly seen in these three Things. *First*, in being kindly affection'd to their Persons; *Secondly*, in being faithful to their Vows: And *Thirdly*, in taking care of, and making all due Provision for them.

*First*, It is seen in being kindly affection'd to their *Persons*. This indeed is what is so properly call'd *Love*, that nothing besides is thought so; and it is so essentially necessary to the making Marriage easy and happy, that nothing else can do it: And where Men marry without liking of the Person of their Wives, if they do not intend to be miserable themselves, yet they may reasonably be presum'd to intend to make their Wives so, because it is the likeliest thing in the World to make them so; and there are very few Women in the World, that would, upon such Supposal, marry; because they know, that tho' a Liking of their Person will not of it self make them happy, yet, that without it nothing else *will*. It is certain that Religion, Virtue, and Discretion, and good Qualities, and Birth, and Education, and Fortune, and Estate are all to be considered, in their several measures and degrees, to make a married Life truly and lastingly happy; but yet, without a Love and Liking of the Person, there will be no such thing as true and lasting Happiness: All the other things will not effect this End, unless this also be added to them; they will make Men civil, and of good Behaviour; and consequently, the Wives shall not be cruelly and brutally us'd; they shall not be miserable, nor pitiable to Strangers and Standers-by; but they shall

shall not find themselves happy for all that. It is not Honour, and Respect, and perhaps Esteem, that will make the Wives happy; but a Tenderness of Affection, which they had rather have, than all things else; and, without which, the rest are vain Formality, and an insipid Courtship, a Sacrifice without a Heart, and mere Hypocrisy.

Virtue, good Qualities, and the other Considerations above-mentioned, are not only very desirable, and of great Service, in themselves; but are also very useful, as they recommend the Person to Favour and Acceptance; and if they do not that, they contribute little to making the married Life happy; they help to make it not so miserable, as it would be without them, but of themselves they never make it happy.

I would not, by all this, be understood to recommend a Face or Shape, or Mien and Figure; or say, that no Man ought to marry without Form or Beauty; but understood to say, that no Man ought to marry, where something or other does not recommend the Person to his Liking and Acceptance; because, without this Liking and Affection, he will never make his Partner happy, nor himself; which he is certainly oblig'd to do, as much as in him lies. God hath not tied Men to Reason strictly in these Matters, nor to shew a sound unerring Judgment in their Choices; these Affections are under the Dominion of the Fancy, and the Choice is innocently govern'd and directed by Imagination; and whatever any Man thinks beautiful and comely, graceful and taking, is certainly so to him, whatever 'tis to other People. There is some-  
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thing most divinely wise in this Contrivance and Disposal; by which a world of Mischief and Confusion is avoided, that would undoubtedly arise on these Occasions, but for this great Variety and Strength of Fancy and Imagination, by which Men see at first, and are still held on seeing, and are pleas'd with Beauties, and good Qualities, that are not so well discern'd by others, nor acceptable to them. Useful are all the Faculties that God hath given us; even those, that often cheat us, sometimes do us Service. Whoever therefore marries, without this fanciful Affection in some degree and measure, can never make his Partner happy; because it is *that* in which she chiefly places her Happiness, and without which she does not find herself happy; and after all that can be said, no one is, or can be happy in this World, but they who think, and find themselves to be so.

Few Women are so weak as to think they can be happy with the Affection of the Mind only; but they all of them know, that where that is wanting, all besides is mere Shew and Appearance of Ease and Happiness: They know that Wealth and Estate gives them not quiet and contented Minds; and they know that Religion, Virtue, and Discretion, and a world of good Qualities are lost and insignificant, where the Affection of Person does not recommend and set them off: Sometimes they are not seen at all, nor any Complacence taken in them, where the Party that exercises them is not acceptable, or finds no Favour in the other's Eyes: So that it comes to pass, that many

many Men are counted happy, and might indeed be so in the good Qualities, and Virtue, and Discretion of their Partners, who yet are otherwise, for want of this Affection of the Heart, through which the rest are lost, and undiscerned, and which (if there) would make them both happy: This Affection will supply many Defects, and make amends for many Failings; this will cover many Faults, and make a world of Evils and domestick Inconveniencies lighter and easier: So that, in kindness to himself, a Man of Wisdom and Discretion will be careful never to marry where he cannot literally comply with God's Commands to Husbands, to *Love their Wives.*

The Love of every other Relation may be exercis'd and shewn in kind and proper Effects, without this inward and sincere Affection to the Person; as that of Parents to their Children, and Children to their Parents; Brothers and Sisters to each other; Friends and Neighbours, and Acquaintance, Masters and Servants, Superiours and Inferiours; each may discharge their several Duties to each the other, in Acts of Kindness becoming, and requir'd of their Relation; and yet, through some Misfortune and Mistake, Disgust and Provocation, may not truly love their Persons, and that, as it may happen, without Blame, and things may still go on fairly and decently on either hand: But *this Relation* calls for Personal Love and Tenderness, and is not satisfied with all the Expressions and Effects of Love and Kindness that can be shewed, but must be secure both of the Heart and Principle, or else it languishes and

and dies. In a word, it is a vain thing for any Man to marry with Hopes of being happy and at ease himself, or making his Partner so, without some liking of her Person ; and therefore they, who look upon this Matter as religious, and intend to lead a virtuous and a sober Life, will never suffer any, or all the Considerations in the World, to induce them to marry, where there is any sort of Aversion, or great Indifference to a Person, or where, at least, there is not great probability of loving.

The Peace and Acquiescence of the Mind is certainly to be preferr'd to all other Considerations whatever, as being indeed the End of all the Labours and Pursuits of Life ; every thing we endeavour, or do, being in order (we intend and hope) to the attaining Quiet and Content. Now this a Man can hardly have, that is not easy at his own home ; and that a Man can never be, that lives in constant view of an unacceptable Object, and converses with one whom he either hates, or despises. And it is a huge Mistake to think, that either Portion or Alliance, or any other such Convenience, will make Men Compensation and Amends, and give that Ease and Quiet which mutual Love and Tendernels will give. All those Conveniences can only furnish out a better Table, more Attendance, and finer Garb : Whereas both Men and Women find they are, and can be very miserable and discontented in the midst of all such Plenty, whilst they are sure that, in the mean time, they want that Kindness and Affection of Heart, that only makes a great Fortune easy and useful

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to them, and that would make a meaner Fortune relish much better.

Considering, therefore, how much the Peace and Happiness of a Man's whole Life depends upon his Choice, he can neither answet it to God, nor Man, nor to himself, that marries where he does not, or cannot love. And therefore, since a Man is commanded by God *to love his Wife*, and that he cannot love where and when he pleases, he must needs be understood to be commanded; *First*, Not to enter upon Marriage, where he does not love: And, *Secondly*, when he *is* married, to continue his Love, and take all Courses that are proper to confirm and strengthen that Affection, and to avoid all manner of Occasions that may weaken and decay it in his Mind.

*First*, A Man is certainly oblig'd by God's Command *to love his Wife*; and because this is not to be done whenever a Man pleases, he is therefore oblig'd not to enter upon Marriage where he does not love: A Man is not oblig'd, we know, to marry, but he is oblig'd to love when married; and since that can hardly be, if he does not love before, he is certainly oblig'd not to marry if he cannot love. It may not be reasonable for a Man to enter upon such or such an Office; but it is very reasonable he should *not* enter on it, with an utter Incapacity of discharging it as he ought. And therefore, the contracting of Children, young and uncapable of knowing what themselves and Partners are, or shall be; and setting the Years of Consent very forward to each Party, whatever other good Ends it may

serve, or prevent Evil, yet it is certainly of evil consequence with respect to the Peace and Happiness of the succeeding Life, if Love and mutual Liking do not follow. That Practice aims most commonly at securing an Estate and Fortune: But it were better, generally, if let alone; because the attaining of that End is not the principal and best Design of Marriage, but something in order to it: It will make those, who are already at ease, much easier; but it will not give Agreement, Union of Affection, Ease and Satisfaction of Mind, which is to be the Bottom and Foundation of People's Happiness: Upon this account 'tis also probable, that so many People of great Degree and Rank are made miserable, and more miserable than their Inferiours, by their imprudent Choices. Respect is generally had to nothing but Birth and Quality, to Fortune and Alliance, without regard to Person, Shape and Figure, to Virtue and good Qualities, and other Endowments proper to engage and hold the Affections: And hence they become splendidly and exemplarily unhappy, as if it were the Sport of Fortune to level all Mankind; and, by some odd Disaster, or their own Folly, to reduce the greatest People to an Equality of Misery and Trouble with their Inferiours; that all the World might be alike happy, all things considered and compar'd together.

There can, indeed, no Good be reasonably expected, where Affection does not first engage, before Religion ties the married Pair together. A Christian, truly, cannot, with a good Conscience,

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nor with common-Honesty and Truth, make such a solemn Promise of Affection, as the Form of Marriage calls for and requires, when he is conscious to himself that he has nothing of it in his Heart; but finds, it may be; an Aversion and Dislike, but yet goes on for other Reasons and Considerations: He cannot answer it to God; for he is then deceiving, and, it may be, ruining one whom at that time he seriously professes, before God, that he will love, and make as happy as he can. There are, in a word, a thousand Reasons why every Man should take all heed of marrying where he finds he cannot love; and none at all against such Caution: And therefore, some Parents would do well to consider seriously, before they press their Commands too closely on their Children, to marry where there is no likelihood of loving, or of being belov'd. They have a great Authority, no doubt, in these Affairs, (as I have shewn you already, at large, in treating of the Filial and Parental Duties) but no one has Authority enough to make an innocent Party miserable; and if a Parent had, he would undoubtedly forego it. And therefore, 'tis not good to be over-rigorous, where it may reasonably be thought the Children's Refusal proceeds from some unaccountable Disgust, or an incurable Aversion. The Parent may consider, that, in such a Case, the Obedience and Compliance of a Child may make her much more miserable, than Disobedience and Refusal would make her faulty; but when a Man is at his Liberty, and under no Constraint, for him to marry without Love, is inexcusable. From all

which, it appears exceeding plain, that, for Husbands to comply with God's Commands, and St. Paul's Advice, *to love their Wives*, it is absolutely necessary that they make such Choice as may engage their Affection: And that they never marry where they cannot like, for any worldly Interest whatsoever.

But to comply with this Command, it is not enough to choose at first, where Men can like; for they are also bound to continue this their Love to their Lives end; *i. e.* as long as they are Husbands; and therefore they must needs be oblig'd to take such Courses as are proper to confirm and strengthen their Affection, and to avoid all manner of Occasions that may wear it out, or weaken it. Some of the ancient Christians (as we have seen) would allow the Wives to employ more Art and Cost in decking and adorning of themselves, than other single Women; because they judg'd it absolutely necessary to the Peace and Happiness of their Lives, to preserve and secure to themselves the Affections of their Husbands, and therefore indulg'd that to them, which they denied to others: And it is no less necessary, to the securing this their Peace and Happiness, that Men should take more care than ordinary, still to continue their Affection to them; and should not suffer Errors and Mistakes, Miscarriages and light Offences, Infirmities and heedless Indiscretions, or the like, to alienate their Hearts from them, or give them a slight and despicable Opinion of them; for that will quickly grow to Coldness and Indifference towards them, and then they are not far

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from personal Dislike, and an Aversion, although secret.

They, who cannot bear with many Failings and Defects, and make a great many Allowances, are not well fitted for Society and Friendship, even at large, and much less for Society so constant and continued, as the married State requires: And therefore, if Men will not consider with themselves the Imperfections of humane Nature; if they will not remember their own Mistakes and Miscarriages; if they will be unreasonable, and take Advantages, and make ill-natur'd Observations and Reflections on the Follies and the Weaknesses of their Partners, and treasure them up in Memory, and reserve them to feed their ill Humour, and make them Occasions of Distast, and Topicks of Upbraiding and unseemly Revilings; they will quickly see an end of Peace and Quietness, and find their Affection cool and languish. When once Men fall into this Perverseness, and take any Ease in entertaining such Surmises and Conceits, as will (although insensibly) beget a cheap and vile Opinion of them, they have laid the Foundation of future Discontent and Discord, and are in Readiness and Disposition for Ayersion and Hate to follow; and then the greatest Care and Circumspection, the most observant and discreet Behaviour of the Women, is not able to regain their good Opinion and Esteem. When once the Heart is cold, or alienated and estrang'd, it is a Work of mighty Difficulty to bring it on again, and warm it into new Affection: And therefore every thing, that tends to such estranging of it, is to be carefully

fully avoided by all that would themselves be easy, and make their Partners so also.

The Women are presum'd, because it is so much their Interest, as well as Duty, to attend this Matter carefully, to preserve the Affection and Esteem of their Husbands, by all the fair and virtuous Methods they can take; but that will not suffice, unless the Men will make it easy to them by Prudence and Good-nature: *They* must be also disposed to think well of, and take in good part, the Endeavours of the others; for it is not enough, that a thing be well *done*, unless it be also well *taken*: Without this Consideration and Goodness of Disposition, there will be no such thing as Love and mutual Kindness: For all Creatures are imperfect, and stand in need of Patience and Forgiveness at one another's hands: And in a constant Conversation, and the Management of many and various Family Affairs, there will unavoidably arise many Occasions of Disagreement, and Distast; and if, on both sides, there be not a Readiness to make the kindest Construction of each other's Actions, to believe the best, and lay the Faults upon unlucky Accidents, and disregard a great many Inconveniencies, and pass them over patiently and gently, the conjugal Affection will be quickly lost; for it only lives by kind Forbearance, mutual Condescension, and a good Esteem of each the other.

And when a Man considers, that it is his Interest and his Ease, as well as Duty, to love his Partner, and that he ceases to be quiet and happy when he begins to dislike, or be averse to her;

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he will find it worth his while to take some care and pains to feed, and to continue his Affection: It will not be thought so indifferent a thing, to like or dislike, even with respect to *this* World, that it should be a matter of Humour, and not Choice, to be a good Husband; for it is the wisest and most useful thing that he can do, and that which will contribute most to his Content and Quiet; and therefore, for his own sake, a tolerably prudent Man, considering he can never change it, will make the best of his Condition; which will be by making it most easy and delightful to them both; since, in all likelihood, of the many Millions of married People in the World, a very few are happy and at ease, whose Partners are not so in like measure with them.

I have dwelt thus long upon this Subject; because, though it deserve the most serious Consideration, yet it seldom has it. It would not be out of the way, to say, that most Men in the World (at least in these Parts) are happy, or unhappy, according to the Choice they make of their Wives. So far at least is certain, that a bad Choice will trouble all the rest of their Felicities, and hinder Men from being easy with them: And therefore, since it is of so great Consequence, it wants, and ought to have a great and sober Deliberation. It is the Means and Method God hath pitch'd upon, to continue on the World, till he fees fit to put an end to it; and tho' he hath implanted in Men such Desires as are conducive to the End he hath design'd; yet he hath given them Reason, Judgment, and Understanding to direct

and guide them in their Choice, and to give the Check to their Imagination in some measure, and distinguish them from all inferiour Creatures. They are not, like those Creatures, at their liberty to wander up and down as common to the whole Species; but they must fix on one particular and proper Object, and settle there: As their first Father had but one *Eve*, so are his Children to content themselves with such like Choice, and there abide till Death shall set them at their liberty. This is the original Appointment of Marriage, even in Paradise, when Man was high in God's Favour.

Now, because it is impossible, where there are two Persons and two Wills, but there will be Dispute in Matters of Debate and Doubt, which shall be uppermost and superiour, God hath decided it, as well by natural Indications, as by positive Commands, that Man shall reign and govern, and therefore Women are to be obedient and submissive: But, in return for this Submission and Obedience, Man is to love his Wife, and to affect *her*, above all the World. This he is commanded by God to do; and because it is not in Man's power to love and like whom, and wherever he will, he is in Reason oblig'd to marry nowhere but where he can love; he cannot otherwise comply with God's Commands: The Reasonableness and Necessity of this, I have been trying to shew from many great Inconveniencies and grievous Mischiefs, that are likely, and do usually arise from marrying otherwise, upon mere worldly Considerations. Not, that many other things, besides

besides Affection to the Person, are not to be well considered and sought after ; for they are undoubtedly, and Men without them never will or can be happy, especially religious Education, virtuous and discreet Behaviour, and other good Qualities, as well as Birth and Fortune : But that all other Considerations are of little use to make a Marriage happy, where Affection to the Person is found wanting ; all Advantages imaginable will not make a Woman easy, where the Affection of the Heart is wanting : And since the Wife is to be made as happy as she can by Marriage, a Husband cannot answer it to God, nor her, nor to himself, that marries with Aversion and Dislike.

And it is yet more reasonable, that when the Men *are* married, they should still continue on their Love ; and, in order to that, should take all Courses to confirm and strengthen their Affection, and avoid all manner of Occasions that may weaken and decay it. Because, without this personal Love, they will be in great danger of not continuing true and faithful to their Vows ; and of not making such Provision for them as is fit and reasonable, which are the other Particulars in which the Love of Husbands is requir'd to shew itself, of which, &c.

**D I S C O U R S E XIII.**

COLOSSIANS III. VERSE 19.

*Husbands Love your Wives, and be not Bitter against them.*

**H**aving shewn you, that the Laws of God, enjoyning the Performance of such and such Duties to Parties so and so related, are all in conformity to right Reason and the Laws of Nature; and exact and require no other Performances than what are necessary to the fair and due Discharge of all those several Duties: And that all the several Duties of Relations of all sorts (none in the World excepted, no not that between the great Creator and his Creature) do mutually infer each other, and are therefore due, and paid for the sake of each the other: And that, in the particular Case before us, God having made it first in Nature and Reason, and, afterwards, by positive Command, the Duty of *Wives to be submissive, subject, and obedient to their Husbands*, had also, first in Nature and Reason, and after, by express Commands, made it the Duty of *Husbands to love their Wives*. And having shewn, that the Love of Husbands to their Wives consisted in these three Particulars: 1. In being kindly affectioned to their Persons. 2. In being faithful to them, in keeping to their Promise and Engagement. And, 3. In taking care of, and making all due provision for them: I had only time to speak to the first

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Particular, and to try to shew the absolute Necessity of the Wife's *Person* being acceptable in the sight of her Husband, (let it be upon what account it will) and that, without such favourable Prepossession, the Man will neither be himself easy, nor make his Partner happy as she should be. This I insisted on, for a world of Reasons and Considerations, such as all Men know and feel the force of, whether they act against them, or comply with them: And upon this account, that Husbands are commanded *to love their Wives*, yet have it not in their power to love where, and whenever they please, it is but reasonable to think they are commanded not to marry where there is any secret Dislike, and much more where there is any Aversion; because this puts them into an utter Incapacity of ever discharging their Duty, and obeying God's Commands; and moreover, that when they *are* married, they are oblig'd to take all reasonable and prudent Courses to settle and confirm, and continue in their Love, and carefully to avoid all manner of Occasions that may weaken and decay it in their Minds.

To all this I have already spoken at large. I am now to go on and consider the other Particulars, in which the Love of Husbands is to be shewn towards their Wives: And the next is, the being faithful to them, the being true to their Engagements, Promises, and solemn Vows. This mutual Fidelity is so essentially necessary to Marriage, that the Breach and Violation of it, succeeding notoriously, does not only dissolve the most

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religious Contracts, and most solemn Promises of Marriage, and set the innocent Party at full liberty, but it dissolves the Marriage Band it self immediately before God. It is indeed the Bottom and Foundation of all those Promises and Contracts, the very Reason on which they proceed, and the Supposition upon which all such Engagements are built, although not verbally express'd. And therefore, when this Supposition fails, when this Ground and Foundation of the Contract and Engagement is remov'd and overturn'd, the Contract is it self no longer binding to the innocent and unoffending Party: They may proceed in their Engagements if they please, and choose; but the Transgression of the other side sets them at liberty, notwithstanding the most serious and most solemn Promises; the Transgression (that is to say) that succeeds and follows, not that which goes before the Contract: There is no retrospect to be had, no looking back to Offences committed heretofore; the greatest Guilt of that kind possible dissolves no following Obligation, because the Offence must have relation to the Party contracted with, who is hereby suppos'd to be extreamly injur'd and abus'd; and therefore regard is only to be had to those Offences that do violence to such Contract, which must be only such as follow after such a Contract.

And what does all this shew, but that the Nature of a Christian Marriage is such, that it does unavoidably require mutual Fidelity, and the Performance of their Promise made to forsake all other Persons, and to adhere to each the other,

so long as they both shall live? This is suppos'd and implied in all Contracts; and verbally express'd, and actually engag'd for in all compleated Marriages: And to this Fidelity the Men are equally obliged with the Women, how little soever they observe, or think of it. They make the same Promise; they are tied by the same Reason, and by the like Command of God: And if there be some difference betwixt the Offence of one Party, and of the other, with respect to Reputation, and the Confusion of Families, it is not what concerns the Conscience, it falls not properly under *our* Consideration. It is (we have seen) the Bottom of all Contracts: *Fidelity* is what the Men engage for, on their part, and the true Reason of the Women's engaging for the same, on theirs. And therefore, in the Violation of it, there is Falshood and Injustice, they break a solemn Promise, and they do a great Injury: Let any one consider whether those be not great Matters, and not to be lightly pass'd over: Whether it be not what himself expects from her, and is not, for the Violation of it, ready to call for Fire from Heaven for Vengeance: But if a Man be so far gone in favour to himself, as not to think very heinously of his own Offences in this Instance, let him, to get a truer sight of the matter, and to pass a better Judgment on it, let him remove it from himself, and consider it in the case of his Mother or his own Daughter; whether he would not think them injur'd in the highest manner, if either of their Husbands should prove false, and wander from their Beds, in pursuit

suit of unhallowed Pleasures: And just as he imagines *they* would take the Falshood and Injustice of their Husbands, let him imagine that his own Wife takes *his*, and bears it with the same Concern and Heaviness. It is just as reasonable and fit that his own Father, or his Son-in-Law should injure and afflict his Mother and his Daughter, as he should injure and afflict his Wife, by such his Falshood. And if the Sense of their injurious grievous Treatment move him either to Rage or Pity, it may sufficiently instruct him, what deep Wounds his own vile Perjuries are dealing daily to his Partner.

The deep Resentment of this Injury by the Wives, is therefore a farther Aggravation of its Heinousness: This Breach of Faith is not a piece of Falshood and Injustice of little or no moment, and which is easily pass'd by, and born; but one of the sharpest Injuries that can be done, and the worst taken by those that are concern'd: God has so order'd it, that, of all Wrongs, it should be the most grievous and afflicting, and felt most sensibly; to make Men, certainly, most careful to avoid the doing it. And therefore, tho' all Falshood of this nature be exceeding sinful, yet certainly those Husbands are yet more unpardonable, who, to their Falshood, add an impudent Contempt of Decency and good Fame, and openly afflict and grieve their Partners by an abominable Commerce. This Unkindness is not necessary even to the Prosecution of their wicked Purposes, and therefore the more cruel and inhumane: It is not only in defiance to Religion and good Morals, and to the reproach

reproach of good Laws, and the scandal of a Kingdom, but in it self unnecessarily barbarous and provoking; it were more manly, just and honourable to be a good Hypocrite, and not to give such publick Offence and Grief, where they are bound to give all Ease and Happiness. This is a great Aggravation of Falshood, and makes it cruel, as well as impudent and injurious.

Not but that the most conceal'd and secret Violations of the Marriage-Faith are also in effect unkind; and alienate insensibly, and by degrees, the Hearts and Affections of Husbands from their Wives. A great many Accidents occasion Differences and Contests, as well as a Diversity of Humours; and the Society is, notwithstanding them, easy enough, and to be born with tolerable Satisfaction; but that great Change and Estrangement of the Mind, that usually arises from the Husband's Falshood, and adulterous Thefts, is to the Wife remarkably conspicuous and uneasy: That Coldness and Indifference that succeeds, in spite of all their Art, and faint Endeavours to conceal it, by Civilities and formal Kindness, is easily and soon distinguish'd and discern'd. And therefore upon this account it was so necessary to insist so long upon the first particular Instance, the *being kindly affectioned to the Person*; because it is the surest and most likely way to prevent Men's falling into these adulterous and abominable Snares; and because the giving way to these corrupt Affections, is the most sure and ready way to dissolve and break the strongest Marriage-love that ever was: And therefore, if it be so absolutely necessary

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ry for *Husbands to love their Wives*, as God commands, there is nothing in the World so likely to retain their Affections, as being faithful to their Vows.

When Men give way to new Engagements, it is but reasonable to conclude, the old one's are wearing out; they will indeed wear out, in spite of all Designs and Resolutions to the contrary: Men are not so much Masters of themselves, as they imagine, upon such Occasions; they do not understand their Power and Strength sufficiently, when they intend to be good Husbands, and yet frequent the Company of wicked Women; the virtuous Love declines as fast, and far, as the disorderly and criminal Affection gains ground: Those Passions seldom or never meet in one Man; a Man may think they will, but the longer he tries, the more he will find himself deceiv'd. He may intend and purpose that, notwithstanding all his Follies and Transgressions, he will still retain his old Affection to his Partner; but 'tis not in his Power; 'tis lost insensibly, and by degrees, by wandring new Desires. It ends, at best, in ceremonious, formal, cold Civilities; but much more commonly in secret Hatred and Aversion, in outward Quarrel and Contest, churlish or brutal Usage; nay, and sometimes in very Tragical Events. The wisest Husband in the World cannot foresee the Consequences of his Falshood, nor know where it will end in this World. And therefore, if a Man be sensible and convinc'd, that very much of, if not all the Peace and Quiet of his Life, depends upon the Mind and Affection

he bears to, and the good Opinion and Esteem he has of his Partner, he will, of all things in the World, keep faithful to her; for so we find it is, (and wisely ordered too) that the Affection of the Wife makes not the Husband happy, unless the Husband also love the Wife: It is the mutual Kindness of each Party that blesses the Relation; it is not the receiving Love and Favour from another, that is truly pleasing and delightful, unless our Minds are also well affection'd to them; and we find ourselves as well dispos'd as they, to make as kind Returns.

So Parents do not feel the Joy and Pleasure of their Relation, in receiving Love and Honour and Obedience from their Children, unless they find themselves possess'd of that Affection, Tenderness and Care towards their Children, that is properly parental; half at least is wanting, to compleat their Joy and Happiness, where their own Hearts are not prepar'd with such Affection as is truly parental, and peculiar to that Relation.

It must be much more so, certainly, in the Relation betwixt Wife and Husband; 'twill be impossible for either of them to be happy singly, either in the Affection of their Partner, or in their own; they must unite their Minds, or be uneasy: We cannot possibly be well and easy in the World, unless that other People will discharge the several Duties which they owe us; but the greatest Pleasure and Content arises from the discharging well the Duties that we owe to others; that it might always be more in our own

power to make our selves happy, than in any one's else to hinder us from being so. Let never Man or Woman think of being happy in the Affection of each the other, unless they are themselves as tenderly affection'd to the other, as the other is to them. And therefore 'tis a vain Mistake, for any Husband to think he shall live easily and kindly with his Partner, be her Affection never so strong and true to him, whilst he is, in his Heart, indifferent, or cold to her. And upon this account, whoever would be truly happy (as far as Men can be in such Relation) must certainly be faithful to his Vows, and never wander.

Were not Religion any ways concern'd in this Dispute, were there no Obligation on the Conscience urging this Fidelity; yet common Prudence and Experience would prescribe it, as the likeliest Method of securing that Affection of Husbands to their Wives, that is truly necessary to the Discharge of that Relation, and to the promoting and maintaining Domestick Peace and Happiness, in the manner that is needful. I shall therefore need only to mention the Command of God, enjoyning this Fidelity, which, added to the former Reasons, makes the Transgressor inexcusable. It is truly so much a Man's *Interest* to be true and faithful to his Vows and Promises, that 'tis enough barely to say, it is his *Duty* also. It is *one of ten* Commandments, which argues its Importance most convincingly. All married People are forbid Adultery; and, in order to fulfilling that Command, are bid to love each other; for they,

they, who love each other, will be faithful to each other; and they, who are not faithful to each other, will not, cannot long continue loving each other as they ought.

To all these Reasons and Commands the Men of Liberty have nothing to oppose in earnest, but the Examples of some Men in Scripture, high in God's Favour; who yet had more Wives than one, or at least had many Concubines. But to this it may be answer'd, that *Example* is not the Rule of Life, but *Precept*: A great many good Men have done very ill things; and when the Scriptures recount their evil Actions, without Blame or Censure, they do not thereby justify and approve them: If there be a Rule in Scripture censuring and forbidding such and such Actions, it is enough; those Actions are sufficiently condemn'd by such a general Rule, though not particularly blam'd in the Recital of them. We should have known Murder and Adultery to have been great Sins in *David*, by their being expressly prohibited by God's Commands, although the Scriptures had told us an hundred times, that he was a Man after God's own Heart, and had not mentioned God's being highly displeased at them in particular. His being a Man after God's own Heart, would not have made us believe that Murder and Adultery were innocent and allowed in him, whilst we found them condemned by God's Word in general; but we should have concluded, that *David* was, except in these Matters, a careful Worshippers of God, and, for many good Qualities, dear to him. But however,

some of these Liberties might be permitted in those Days and Places, for Reasons proper and peculiar to them, which would not be fit for other Folks, at other times. And *lastly*, it is most reasonable to look to the first Institution of it, which was in Paradise, where *Adam* had but one *Eve*: And in the Restoration of the World by *Noah* and his Sons, after the Flood, where each of them had but one *Wife*: And yet, at these two Seafons, there was the greatest occasion of multiplying People to inhabit the World, that ever yet has been; and whatever Permissions, or Indulgences follow'd afterwards, 'tis certain that our Saviour Christ reduc'd it to its first Appointment and Institution, and so the Christian World has ever since maintained it.

The other Particular, in which the Husbands are to shew they love their Wives, is, in taking care of, and making all due provision for them: To maintain them as becomes their Partners, whilst they live, and to leave them wherewithal to subsist, according to their Estate and Condition, in case they happen to survive them. They are, according to good Sense and Reason, and to the Customs of our Country, *Friends* and *Companions* to their Husbands, not *Slaves*, nor *Menial Servants*, and therefore are, in Decency, to be their Partners in their Fortunes. They will unavoidably partake of all their Troubles and Afflictions; and therefore it is but just, that they should share of their Felicities: A Husband cannot fall into Decay and Poverty, nor hardly any sort of Calamity, but he will certainly have his

Wife

Wife involv'd therein with him; they are inseparable Companions in Misery and Misfortune: And therefore what can make amends for this, but the Certainty of partaking in all their good Fortune also? Neither is this any more, than what is expressly promis'd and agreed to in the Matrimonial Contract, by which it is provide d, that *the Wife is endowed with all the Husband's worldly Goods*; that is, she is to have the use of every thing belonging to him, that is necessary, convenient, and delightful; to be as easy and as happy, as his worldly State and Condition can make her. She bargains for it upon *her* part, and he engages for it upon *his*, and is unjust, as well as unkind, if he deny it.

Neither is this Care to end here; it is not enough to let them partake of all the Blessings of this World in common with them, whilst they liye together; but it must also extend it self to the providing for them, after they themselves are dead, if they survive; and that according to what is seemly and becoming, according to the Quality and Condition they have lived in (if there be Ability) and according to the Customs of the Place. It is indecent, as well as hard, that they should fall from Plenty and Esteem, into a State of Poverty and Vileness. And therefore, the churlish and ill-temper'd Men are not only to blame, who deny their Wives, whilst living with them, what is handsome and convenient for them; but even the kindest and best natur'd Men alive, who take no care of their Support and Maintenance, in case they overlive

them: These are properly the *bad Husbands*, who, by their Folly and Profusenes, or by Neglect and Idlenes, by Gaming, or Intemperance, or other evil Courses, leave them (as they call it) to the wide World, expose them naked, and unprovided, to Want and Misery, and great Calamities.

Men will in vain pretend to Love and Kindnes, that are careles in this Particular, and make not a reasonable Provision for their Widowhood, as they are able; but rather choose to live at large, and leave them destitute and helpless; as if the Sorrows of their solitary State were not sufficient. Where neither Men's Estate, Calling, nor Industry can competently furnish them with Maintenance, it is excusable, though pitiable: But where it proceeds from Carelessness and Negligence, from Wastfulness and Ill-husbandry, or from *any* Cause and Occasion, in a Man's Power to hinder and prevent; there, the not making due Provision for their Maintenance and Ease, is both indecent, and unkind, and most exceedingly blameable. A true and virtuous Love will shew it self in outward kind Effects, as well as in the inward Movings of the Heart: And they, who are the Parties most concern'd, must be able to witness their being well belov'd, by such good Fruits and Consequences as that kind Passion usually produces; one of which, is certainly a due regard to the Relation, and Affection, the Quality and Condition of Wives, whilst they liv'd with them, and a proportionable Maintenance for them.

These are the three Particulars, in which the Husbands are to shew the Love which God commands

mands them to their Wives. They are to be kindly affection'd to their Persons; they are to be true and faithful to them, and to maintain them decently and handsomly in all respects, whilst they live with them; and to take all due care, according to their Condition and Ability, to leave them easy, when themselves are dead and gone. Neither is the Duty of the Relation of Husbands to be sufficiently discharg'd, by any one or two of these Particulars, but by all together: They are indeed so chain'd and knit together, that whoever, upon good Principles, observes to fulfil one, will seldom fail of discharging all: He will see the same Reason, and the same Command of God, for all, as much as one. And whosoever considers Matters seriously, and intends to shew himself a sober, virtuous, and religious Man, in this Relation of a Husband, and does not marry with a wild and sensual, heedless, inconsiderate Spirit, will certainly oblige himself to take all care imaginable to make a wise and prudent Choice at first, such as may laudably engage his Affections, and as reasonably retain them; for when that Point is well settled, the rest will follow easily, and not without it. Affection will engage Men to Fidelity, and make them duly careful and solicitous of making fit Provision for them, both in Life and Death. And truly, without this Foundation, it will be very hard for any Husbands to comply with St. Paul's Advice, *to love their Wives*; or with the other part of it, in the words of the Text, *not to be bitter against them*:

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which are in the last place to be considered, and that in a few words.

The Phrase seems to be taken from the Offence and Disgust that bitter things give when tasted, and not liked. And the Advice is, that Husbands should not, by a peevish and morose, a churlish and ill-natur'd Carriage, make themselves as uneasy and unagreeable to their Wives, as bitter things are distastful to the Palate ; or, that they should not be provok'd to Anger and Distast, and hard unkind Words or Actions, by the Failings, Heedlessness, and Imperfections of their Wives ; as the Palate or Stomach is provok'd to disgust and loathing, by the Taste of any thing very bitter. In short, they are to use, neither in Word nor Deed, any Ungentleness, or Rigour towards them.

There is a Bitterness of Language that every one understands, and Words that wound to the quick ; and, as the *Psalmist* says, are very Swords : But that, which gives them usually their Point and Edge, is the Consideration of the Person that speaks, and the Relation he stands in to us : The Words of Strangers, weak or ignorant, though never so bad, are in a manner idle, and affect us little : The Words of a malicious Adversary make no very deep Impression, because we commonly expect no better from him : But the hard Words of Friends and Neighbours, Acquaintance and Relations, occasion us Grief and great Concern. The ill Usage of others stirs us to Anger and Indignation, but 'tis against *them* ; but the ill Usage we receive at the Hands of those we

love,

love, and from whom we look'd not for it, occasions Sadness and much Trouble, Pain and Uneasiness within. It is the Defeat of our Expectation and Desire that hurts us most, on these occasions: We know we love, and we would be belov'd; we try to oblige by all means, and we would be again oblig'd in our turn; we favour them, and would be recommended to their Favour; and, failing of these Returns, expected and desired by us, we are the more afflicted and disconsolate. Our Concern, under any Disappointment, is still proportion'd to the Hopes we had conceiv'd of another kind of Event. It is upon this account, that harsh and bitter Words become so grievous to near Relations, because they are so little look'd for and expected; the Mind is full of other Hopes, and is surpriz'd to find them so deceiv'd: This, of all other things, makes bitter Words from Husbands so afflicting to the Wives; they are in Reason and Nature to look for all Forbearance, Gentleness and Patience, for Affability and Condescension, and every thing that can proceed from Consideration and Good-nature; and they meet with all the contrary, Moroseness, Peevishness, Impatience, no Allowances, Clamour, Revilings, and ungenerous Upbraiding; And this, to soft and tender Dispositions, is a cruel and afflicting Usage, sits heavy on the Mind, and wounds the Heart most sensibly; makes them pass their Hours uncomfortably, and oftentimes ends their Life in Sorrow.

And upon these accounts this Bitterness is forbidden; it is truly unmanly and unjust, and becoming

coming neither a religious nor a reasonable Creature. We are oblig'd to make the Life of every one as easy and delightful as we can ; and therefore are commanded to be as kind and good to all the World as possibly we can, consistently with the promoting and securing of our own Ease and Happiness, and that of those who are related to us in nearer or remoter degree ; and therefore are most strictly tied to do nothing cruel and unjust to any one : And therefore, when we make those miserable, whom God and Nature hath oblig'd us to make easy and happy, altho' it be by Words only, we are highly to blame ; for if a little Matter will do the same Hurt to one, which a great one will but do to another, we are as much oblig'd to abstain from the small, as from the great Offence : And if the Bitterness of Words be so grievous to tender and good-natur'd People, it is because the kindest and most gentle Language is their due ; they have a Right to look for it, which should not be defeated : And whosoever shall consider to what extraordinary Difficulties and Sufferings God, by his Order and Appointment, hath most unavoidably subjected and exposed the Women above Men, as well by their own natural Frame and Make, as by a great many sad, but usual Accidents, will see himself oblig'd in common Pity to deal gently with them, to help, by Patience and Forbearance, to make their Burthen lighter, and to sustain them under their Infirmities.

There is also *a being bitter* that is carried beyond Words, and proceeds to personal Outrage, Violence, and Hurt ; a thing unworthy any good and

and honest Man, nor justifiable, without a great Necessity, betwixt a Master and his Slave, much less to be endur'd from any Husband to his Partner and Companion, who is of equal Dignity. This Practice, truly villainous, was of so ill Sound and Fame, so very unbecoming the Relation, that the Civil Laws did, in some Cases, allow it a just Ground for a Divorce; and, indeed, when People (at least of any Education, or Fashion) come to that pass, they seem not fit to live together: But yet when they cease to be Friends and kind Companions, they do not presently become Slaves.

I have now done with the Duty of Husbands, contain'd in this Command, to *love their Wives, and not be bitter against them*: In which, there is nothing but what is very reasonable and fit to be complied withal by every good and honest Man; nothing but what will truly tend to the procuring and promoting his own Peace and Happiness, and to the Comfort of his Life. And so, indeed, it is, with the Discharge of every other Duty: We vainly seek for Ease and Happiness in Liberty, and Disengagement from our Duties; whereas, to sober and considering Minds, 'tis evident, that as this World is ordered, it is impossible to be at ease, but by a faithful due Discharge of all the several Obligations laid upon us by the several Relations we contract to one another. When we cease to be good Fathers and good Sons, good Subjects and good Husbands, good Masters and good Servants; how can we possibly be happy? Whom shall we love and honour, and  
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by whom shall we be lov'd and honour'd? Whom shall we gratify and serve, by whom shall we be gratified and serv'd? Whilst we are sociable Creatures, we must have all the social Virtues; we can receive no Duty whilst we pay none. And though, when all is done, we shall never be very happy in this World of Misery; yet we shall never be so, in any tolerable measure and degree, without a good Intention, and a hearty reasonable Endeavour to discharge with Faithfulness and Care the several Duties that we owe to all the World; and which is truly the End and Purpose for which we are sent into it, and continued in it; and of which we shall, one Day, give a strict Account to God, and shall receive a Reward or Punishment, according to our Diligence, or our Neglect of the Performance of those Duties.

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## DISCOURSE XIV.

COLOSSIANS III. VERSES 22, 23, 24.

*Servants, obey in all things your Masters according to the Flesh; not with Eye-service, as Men-pleasers, but in Singleness of Heart, fearing God: And whatsoever you do, do it heartily, as unto the Lord, and not unto Men: Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the Reward of the Inheritance; for ye serve the Lord Christ.*

THESE Words do plainly contain in them, First, A Command to Servants to obey their Masters according to the Flesh, in all things. Secondly, A Caution about the Manner of performing their Duty, and the End they should propose to themselves in doing it: They should not serve with Eye-service, as Men-pleasers, but in Singleness of Heart, fearing God; and whatever they did, they should do it heartily, as unto the Lord, and not unto Men. They should not only serve their Masters well, whilst their Hand and Eye was over them, as if the pleasing *them* were the only thing they aimed at; but they should always be exactly diligent and faithful in their Service, whether their Masters were absent or present, and could discover them or no; they should be, indeed, at all times, and on all occasions, as honest and as careful in their Master's Busineſs, as they would appear to others, and to *them*, whilst looking on them. They should obey in Singleness of Heart, serve sincerely, and without Dissimulation;

tion ; fearing God, looking up to him, and knowing they are always in his Sight ; and *whatever they do, they should do it as to the Lord* ; as obeying Him, and desirous of making themselves acceptable to Him, as well as to Men, either their Masters or others. *Thirdly*, Here is the Reason, Ground and Foundation of the Servants paying all Obedience, and due Service to their Masters, and of their doing it *to the Lord*, or in Obedience to the Lord ; *Knowing that of the Lord, ye shall receive the Reward of the Inheritance, for ye serve the Lord Christ.* The Service and Obedience of Servants shall not go unrewarded in the *other* World, however it fare with them in *this* ; and therefore there is no want of a sufficient Encouragement of their Faithfulness and Diligence ; *they shall receive the Reward of Inheritance* ; they shall be treated in Heaven as God's Children : And this Reward they shall receive *of the Lord*, and therefore there is need of looking up to him, and fearing him, and accounting him their Sovereign Master, *for they serve the Lord Christ.* Their Earthly Masters, or Masters according to the Flesh, may overlook, neglect, or evilly intreat their utmost Labours, Care and Honesty ; but Christ their Heavenly Master, whose they are, and whom they serve, will not so use them ; but seeing from above their faithful, diligent, and honest Labours in their Masters Service, will most unquestionably deal with them as good and honest Servants, and cause them, in due time, *to enter into the Joy of their Lord.* So St. Paul expresses the same thing, in *Ephes. 6.8. Knowing that whatev-*

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*soever good thing any Man doth, the same shall be receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free. Of these things in their order.*

And, *First*, of the Command; *Servants, obey in all things your Masters, according to the Flesh.* To obey *in all things*, is a Command of very great extent, and repeated in the like Terms, *Titus 2.9.* and so the Children are to obey their Parents *in all things*, in ver. 20. of this Chapter; and the Wives are to be subject to their Husbands in *every thing*, *Eph. 5. 24.* And yet you may take it for a Rule, that neither Father, Husband, nor Master, nor any Superiour whatsoever, is to be obeyed *in all things*: Obedience, without Restriction or Reserve, belongs to no mortal Man: And therefore, let Commands be never so express and full, never so general and extensive, there will be always room, and necessity for Limitations and Restrictions, arising from the Reason of the Command, and the Nature of the subject Matter, from the positive Command of God, and from the Laws of the Kingdom, or some other Consideration not to be omitted. And tho', in speaking to the other Relations, I have considered these Exceptions; yet it will not be amiss to take notice here also, in what Particulars neither Masters can require, nor Servants owe, or ought to pay Obedience.

And, *First*, the Laws of God are certainly to be preferr'd to all the Commands of Masters, Mistresses, and all Superiours: If God command one thing to be done, and prohibit the doing another, no Master can dispense with his Servant's neglecting

ing the Command, or venturing on the Prohibition: The Servant is there to obey **God** rather than his **Master**.

And so it is, *Secondly*, with the Laws of the Land; they also are to be preferr'd to all the Commands of Masters and Superiours, because they are above them, and were before them. Even in things not naturally dishonest and immoral, but such as it would be innocent and lawful to do, if they were not actually forbidden by Law; even in such things as these, a Servant is not to obey his Master, because he has not Power to do those things himself, nor Power to bid another do them. The Laws of the Land are superior to all Masters, and are always presum'd to enact upon Reason and good Grounds; and therefore, though Servants are to obey in all things, yet it is only in all things where they are at liberty to obey, by either the Laws of God, or by the Laws of the Land: For the Good of the Community, (which is presum'd to be consider'd and consulted in all Laws, whether it be, or no) being greater and superior to the Good of Servants obeying their Masters, it is but reasonable the Laws should be consider'd and obeyed, rather than any private Orders of a Master, though what is order'd to be done were otherwise innocent and lawful to be done, if it had not been prohibited. This puts it past all doubt, that a Servant never must obey his Master commanding him any thing immoral, or against any positive Law of God. Thus if a Master take his Servant out with him, and order him to set upon another,

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and take away either his Money or his Life, his Command is to go for nothing; he has no Authority to lay such a Command upon his Servant, nor must any Servant pay Obedience to such Orders or Commands. The Obligations that all People, Servants as well as Masters, lie under to be just and honest, and do no Hurt or Violence, or lesser Injury to any one, are antecedent to, and greater than any Obligations that a Master can lay upon his Servant; and therefore, 'till a Master can set his Servant at liberty from the Obedience he owes to God's Laws, positive or moral, and free him from the Penalties of Disobedience, he can lay no Orders of his own upon the Servant contradictory to God's. The Servant must say with himself, what virtuous *Joseph* said under a great Temptation, *How can I do this thing, and sin against God?* How can I possibly comply with such a Command of my Master's, to be unjust or wicked, and know at the same time I am forbidden by God the doing it? God is the Master of us all, and with him there is no respect of Persons; bond or free are alike oblig'd to obey his Laws, and no Power less than his own can dispense with any one neglecting or despising them; and much less will the Command of a Superior here on Earth excuse a Servant, or Inferior, offending against God in pure Obedience to his Master.

The Authority of Masters over Servants is very useful to the Good and Order of Mankind, and to the Welfare of the World; and accounted so reasonable, that a great many small Offences are excus'd in Servants, under Authority, and acting

by Command, because they are under some Constraint and Awe, and because a great many Inconveniences would follow upon the scrupulous Dispute of Servants, weighing and examining the Orders and Injunctions of their Masters. But this can only be understood in Things indifferent, or in Matters wholly above the Capacity of Servants: In all such Cases Submission and Obedience best becomes them; but where the Case is plain and evident, and the Execution of the Command must certainly be hurtful to them, as opposing some Command of God, there they must needs dispute and disobey: There no Body excuses them for acting by Authority, for no one has Authority against Justice, Honesty or Truth; and there is no Capacity too mean to understand their moral Duties, that is sufficient to deliberate, and to execute Designs that overthrow them.

But neither are all Servants alike oblig'd to obey their Masters *in all things*, though innocent and lawful, or indifferent; because that all are not alike Servants. The State of Servitude is very different in one Country, from what it is in another; and in the same Country it is differenced by the Variety of Contracts and Agreements: And the Duty and Obedience of Servants is to be measur'd by those Contracts, and those different Customs. And therefore, when St. Paul exhorts the *Colossian* and *Ephesian* Servants to obey their Masters *in all things*; if some of them were Captives and downright Slaves, and others only Servants by Agreement, and hired out themselves to labour in their Calling for such and such Advantages

tages of Wages and Protection, and upon certain Terms; though both these sorts of People might be properly call'd *Servants* by St. *Paul*, and both exhorted to perform the Duty of Servants to Masters; yet were it evident, that St. *Paul* did not hereby make the State of their Servitude alike, but said the same Words to them, in different Sens-  
es, according to the different Condition of their Servitude. To the Slaves and Captives he would say, *Obey your Masters in all things, as becomes your sad Condition, and make your Chains as easy as you can, by your Compliance and Submission*: But to the hired Servants he would be understood to say, *Obey your Masters in all things, according to your Contract and Agreement; behave your selves as diligently and faithfully, as you have promised them to do, or by the Custom of the Place are presum'd to have promised them*: He might exhort the Slaves to obey their Masters even at the Oar, and in the Mines; but 'twere not reasonable to think he should thereby exhort the hired Servants to submit to be sent under-ground, or to the Labour of the Gallies, if their Masters should command them thither. Neither the Customs of the Country, nor the Contract gave the Masters any such Authority over the hired Servants; and therefore they owe no such Submission or Obedience. And St. *Paul* does not bring them into any new Bondage; but exhorts and commands them to discharge the Duty that they owe, by virtue of their Choice and Undertaking, to serve their Masters in such a Capacity, on such Condition.

It is therefore evident, that Respect must needs be had to the different State of Servitude of different People, to know in what Particulars a Servant is at liberty from complying with some Commands of Masters, that yet are innocent and lawful enough in themselves. Now, if upon supposal of these different sort of Servants, either at *Ephesus*, or at *Coloss*, the Exhortation must be differently understood, with respect to each of them; 'tis plain it must be also understood according to the Usages and Contracts of all the different Countries of the World: For here is no new Servitude induc'd, nor old one abrogated, but Servants are left by Christianity just in the State it found them; their Condition is not at all alter'd; but not for the worse to be sure. And if this were well considered in the higher Instances of Princes and Subjects, as well as in those of Masters and Servants, a great many weak and undue Inferences and Arguments from the State of *Jewish* or *Roman* Government and Subjection, to that of other free and brave Nations, had been avoided, which only serve to perplex well-meaning People. But that which I would chiefly shew hereby, is this, that all Servants, not being alike Servants but of different sorts and degrees, are not alike oblig'd to obey their Masters in all things, but are at liberty in some Particulars, according to their Contracts and Agreements; and are therefore only oblig'd to serve and obey their Masters in all Particulars, wherein they have engag'd to pay them Service and Obedience, either expressly, or implicitly, by the Nature of their Undertaking and

and Employment. And that being the Case and Condition of all Christian Servants with us, is the only Case that is to be considered by us, in speaking to the Duty of Servants.

Every Servant is therefore commanded by God to discharge the Duty and Service which his Station or Agreement require of him ; he must answer the End of his being entertain'd, and fulfil the Conditions upon which he is admitted to Service. This is the Substance and Matter of the Command. The *2d* Thing to be considered, is the Caution adjoin'd about the Way and Manner of performing their Service, and the End they should propose to themselves in doing it : *They should not serve with Eye-service, as Men-pleasers, but in Singleness of Heart, fearing God ; and doing whatever they did, not as to Men, but as to God.* They must not only appear to be good and careful Servants by being diligent, and seeming very just and honest, whilst their Masters are in sight, or when they are sure it will reach their Ears by others Information ; but they must be indeed always so, both in their Absence, and when 'tis likely they shall never hear or know they are indeed so diligent and honest, but by the good Effects and Consequences : They must be so upon religious Principles, because it is their Duty, both by God's Commandment, and their own Engagement ; they are tied by both to serve diligently and honestly, *in Singleness of Heart*, without Dissimulation and Hypocrify : They must be, in Truth and Substance, as good Servants as they would shew and appear to be to Strangers, or their Masters,

*fearing God.* They stand continually in God's Sight, although not always in their Master's Eye; and they should set his Fear before them, who sees them constantly, and knows most certainly, whether they are as diligent and honest in their Master's Ignorance and Absence, as when he stands by, and sees them doing Service. Whatever they do, they should endeavour to approve themselves to God, by doing it in such a manner, that is, by being so diligent and honest in their Service, as that God shall certainly approve them, whether Men do or no. A Master may be pleas'd, because he is deceiv'd with Eye-service, and with a seeming Diligence and Honesty; but God is not so pleas'd, because he is not to be so deceiv'd; but knows the Heart, and sees the Falshood at the Bottom. And when a Servant pleases God, (as all do that are just and faithful, diligent and careful in their Busines) they seldom fail of pleasing Men. They may, by some Misfortune, or Mistake, or by Perverseness, fail of pleasing Men, even when they please God; but then they have the Satisfaction of knowing they design'd to please Men, and took the likeliest Course to do it. For Servants are not here forbidden Eye-service, and pleasing Men, as it imports the doing well and carefully under the Master's Eye, and whilst he is in sight, for that is but reasonable and their Duty; but they are forbidden the being *only* Eye-servants, and the endeavouring to please their Masters whilst they are in sight: And are commanded to behave themselves as well, to be as diligent and just and true, at all times, as in their Master's Presence.

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And if a Servant would but take that for his Rule, he would hardly ever fail of pleasing both God and his Master ; be but as diligent and honest at all times, as his Master sees he is whilst he is with him, and as he would have his Master believe he always is. This would prevent all Sloth, and unreasonable Wast of Time, and all Neglect of Business, and all Deceit, and secret Thefts. A Servant never cares to appear slothful to his Master, because he knows it is a Quality that will never recommend him, and therefore chooses to exert his Vigour and Activity while he is by : He knows then what it is will please him, and what it is that is his Duty ; and therefore he ought, according to his Strength and Abilities, to be as active in his Absence. A Servant, when he enters into Service, gives up his Time and Labour, by Agreement, to his Master, in consideration of what Wages, Keeping, and Protection he expects from him : And therefore he would be unjust to wast that Time, and spare that Labour, that is truly none of his ; they are his Master's by his Contract, and his Master ought to have the Advantage of them : It is defrauding People of what is their due ; it is keeping back part of what is already sold them, and agreed for ; and it would be full as just for a Master to detain part of his Servant's Wages, contracted for, at the Year's end, as it is for a Servant to wast a great deal of that Time, and spare a great deal of that Labour, that was his Master's by Agreement : Because a Servant has no more Right to his Master's Money, than the Master has Right to his Servant's Time and

Labour; the one does not stand to his Bargain and therefore, and thereby, he sets the other at his liberty. Justice is the rendring to all Men what is their due, and Injustice the detaining from any one what is their due.

Now whatever is due by Contract and Agreement from one Party to another, is generally due upon fulfilling such Terms and Conditions; and if one Party fulfill the Terms and Conditions propos'd by the other, he has a Right to all that is promis'd and engag'd for on those Terms, and the other is unjust if he deny it. This makes it evident, that if a Servant contract with a Master to give him all his Time and Labour, for such a space of Days or Weeks, or Months, or Years, and be as good as his Word, and stand to his Bargain; he has an undoubted Right to whatever Wages or Advantage his Master agreed to let him have, and his Master would be a very wicked and unjust Man to deny him it; because he earn'd it, and deserv'd it, and it was his due by Contract and Agreement. This is evident on the Servants side; but then it is as evident on the other hand, that the Servant will have no more Right to his Master's Promise and Engagement, than he gains by performing the Conditions on which that Promise and Engagement stand; and that the Master would not be unjust or wicked in refusing to pay him the full, in case it were fully prov'd, that he had not given that Time and Labour to his Service that he ought. This is but Justice; and if the Laws do not allow or countenance such Defalcations, and Detentions,

it is, because they suppose and put the Servant so much into the Hands and Power of their Masters, that they may make, and see them fulfill their Contracts; and they are presum'd to bear with, and indulge such wast of Time, and sparing of Labour, as would have been fufficient for their Busines; and they must bear the Mischiefs and Inconveniencies, which they would not, tho' they might, prevent, either by constraining them to labour and perform their Duty, or by dismissing them, and having no more to do with them. It is not fit the Law should make the Masters Judges, whether the Servants shall have their Wages contracted for, when the Masters were at liberty to contract, and might see whether the Servants could deserve them; and, in great measure, make them earn them. But yet the Servants cannot help seeing, that it would be but just and reasonable for the Masters to deny them part of their Wages, if they denied, and wrong'd their Masters of that Time and Labour to which their Wages were only due. And therefore idle and slothful Servants know they are unjust and false to their Agreement, when they mis-spend their Masters Time, and give him not that Labour which they owe his Service.

And that they may not be to seek, or troubled with much Scruples and Uncertainty, about the space and proportion of Time and Labour to be bestowed upon the Masters Service, let them consider a little, what they do in *Eye-service*, and when they would *please Men*: And though it would not be reasonable to expect they should

should continually exert such Vigour and Activity on all Occasions, as they do when they would shew themselves to best Advantage; yet it were fit to mend their pace, although they made some tolerable Abatements: They know very well, there is a difference betwixt the Extremities of Slothfulness, and the Quicknes of Eye-service; and that the middle way between them is most reaonable, and would suffice. A moderate and continued Labour has Advantages that Servants do not always think on; it makes their necessary Service, in time, grow easy to them: It is so in all other Cases; continued and repeated Acts beget Habits, and things habitual become easy and familiar to us; and constant and continued Labours do the like, if done with any sort of Moderation. When Strength and Pains are duly and discreetly proportion'd out, they beget a sort of Activity in People, that will not long bear Rest and Idlenes, but puts them uponi Labour and Employment: And therefore it is truly for the Ease and Interest of Servants to bestir themselves, as well as to the Profit of their Masters, and the Discharge of their own Duties to them. It makes their Pains and Labour grow, in time, easy and well to be endur'd by them, and begets in them such an habitual Activity, as will in good time stand them in great stead, when they come to be at liberty, and at their own disposal. Then they will see and feel the Benefit of having been good Servants; they will reap the Fruits of all that Industry, and Care, and Labour, which they exercis'd in the Service of their Masters; *i. e.* they will

will now be industrious, careful, and laborious for themselves, and in their own Concerns, by having long been us'd to be so in their Masters. It will sometimes be otherwise; but this is the most natural and most usual Consequence.

They, who have serv'd their Masters with the greatest Industry and Diligence, will certainly serve themselves the best, when they come to it: They will not only begin with greater Interest and better Credit, but, in all likelihood, they will go on with more Success: There is all the Reason in the World to think they should: That Application of Mind, and Disposition of Body to labour and take pains, which they have long exercis'd, will not now forsake them, but rather be increas'd and rais'd by the Consideration that the Fruits of them will now be gathered by themselves, and come home. The Desire of thriving and succeeding in their Callings, is not so sure and near a way to the doing so, as the being laborious and industrious in them is; for the Desire of thriving can only quicken Men, and put them upon Industry and Labour; it shews them the Means that are necessary to that End, but they may still know this, and still desire, without obtaining it; whereas the Men, that are already both industrious and laborious, seldom want the Desire of succeeding, and find they are already in the right way: This partly gives account why many Servants, when they become Masters, succeed so ill, notwithstanding their Desires and Aims of growing rich, and thriving, because they have not us'd themselves to Industry

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and Labour, and cannot take those pains that are truly necessary to the doing well. They may have Skill and Artifice enough, and may be frugal and good Husbands; but those Things will not do, without great Industry and Labour in their several ways; which will not come when they are call'd for, and found necessary, but must have been laid up before by Use and Custom: Experience therefore teaches this, as well as Reason, that the better Servants any People are to their Masters, the better they will certainly succeed, when they come to manage their own Concerns: And one would think, this very Consideration should prevail with young People to be as careful and industrious as they well can, whilst with their Masters, that they may find the Advantage of it in good time themselves.

There is an absolute Necessity of being careful, diligent, industrious and laborious, if Men have any Aim at living easily and well, and thriving in the World; and these Qualifications are never to be attain'd by any one, but by Use and Custom, and being train'd up to them by a constant and continued Practice; which is to be begun when People are young, their Minds susceptible of Impressions, and pliable to Heedfulness and Application, and their Limbs flexible to Labour: This is the Time and Season of making Industry and Labour habitual to them. All the Care they take, and the Pains they are at, are truly for their own Service at the last; all the Skill and Understanding they get, is a Treasure for themselves: And if their Masters should per-

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mit them to continue ignorant and slothful, it would be so much to their loss and mischief; they would not only serve *them* much the worse, but they would be so much Sufferers *themselves*; they would lose their Time, and be unfit for their Employments: And therefore too indulgent and remiss Masters do never make good Servants, and they will never deserve to find them thankful for such Ease ness. For when the Servants come to be necessitated to Industry and Labour, by some unusual Urgencies, or by the Necessity of their Condition, they are perfectly to seek, and at a loss what to do. These are some of the Inconveniences of Eye-service, of Idleness and Sloth, and Wast of Time, which every Servant should do well to think on. They are injurious to themselves, make them incapable of answering the Designs of their Parents or Friends, in putting them to Trades and Callings, and of their own Designs of living handsomely and suitably to their Condition in the World; and occasion them, at the same time, to be bad Servants, and to defraud their Masters of that Time and Labour which is truly due to them, and which they have agreed themselves to give them; and therefore they are false and unjust, when they deny or take them from them. And tho' the Masters have a Power, by Punishment and by Restraint, to make the Servants do their Duty and their Business, and do not exercise it on them, and might be therefore (as they are in Law) presum'd to rest contented with what is done; yet ought not this to satisfy the Conscience of the Servant,

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who knows he is remiss and negligent in his Master's Concerns; for his Master is all the while deceiv'd, either believing his Busines well done, when it is not; or knowing it is not done, when he might reasonably expect and require it should be done by the Servant; by either of which ways, the Servant is deceitful and unjust. And though the Master does not, or will not take notice of such Neglect, the Neglect and Offence is nevertheless in the Servant; he has not done his Duty, and he is bound to do better for the time to come: He was to do his Duty, not in Eye-service, *but in Singleness of Heart*, in all Sincerity, *and fearing God*, without regard had to what notice his Master might take of his Performances; but rememb'ring what Obligations he lay under by his own Contract or Agreement, and knowing that he was evermore in God's sight, who is the God of Justice, and who loves Truth and Sincerity. And there is nothing more likely both to make and keep Servants good and careful, than to consider that God commands them to be so, and will take account whether or no they are so. And therefore, it signifies little to dissemble with Masters, and pay them with Eye-service, when God discerns and sees their Deceit and Falshood, knows their Hypocrify and counterfeiting Care and Diligence, when at the Bottom they are truly negligent and careless of their Masters Busines.

It would not be true, to tell them that every Fit of Idlenes and Sloth were faulty before God, and that all Loss of Time were *sinful*; for it is  
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not so, something of that kind is unavoidable: But they must needs indulge as little as possible to them; it will in time become a Fault, and lead to Sin, that, seldom practis'd, may be innocent enough; and no way better to prevent it, than rememb'ring, that in the main their Industry and Diligence, and Labours are contracted for, and hired out; and that too great a Wast and Consumption of Time, either in Negligence, or minding other matters than they should, is so much Loss and Injury to those, whose Business should employ and take it up. This Principle should be settled in the Minds of Servants; but it should be in general, and without scruple, so as the Mind should not be made too nice and tender by it; but so as to quicken them to make amends, by new and greater Care and Diligence at one time, for what is wanting at another, by the Surprise of Sloth, and Fits of Listlessness; that, in the whole, they may be satisfied that they have done no Injury, but will discharge the Duty of their Office, and the Trust they undertook. This is also the Case, in great measure, of the hired Servants; as well as of those of the better sort, who are also Servants, buttied with other Bonds. These ought to know, because they are not always young, and heedless, but of Years, Staidness and Experience: They know, or ought to know, that all the Time and Labour that is due to the Discharge of what they undertake, is certainly theirs, who pay them for it; and therefore are oblig'd in Reason and Justice to give it them. Neither do they want Encouragements to ex-

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cite their Industry and Labour, for they subsist by Credit and good Fame; and nothing gives it, or secures it, like the being diligent and careful, industrious and laborious in their Service. This appears even by *Eye-service*, which gets them the good Name they seek for, and by which they live, till they are laid open and discovered: The *Appearance* even of Care and Industry is profitable to them; and therefore, to be sure, the Thing it self would serve them most effectually, and recommend them to such Favour and Good-liking as they want in their Condition.

And let them also add to all these natural Rewards, the Hopes of pleasing God by such their conscientious Industry and Labour, and they will want no more Encouragement to set about it; and that is certainly the Truth of the matter: The Promises of God's Favour here, and, in due time, Rewards hereafter, are affix'd to the Discharge of the Duty of Servants, as fully as they are to the Discharge of the Duty of any other Relation whatsoever, either Natural or Civil; *they serve the Lord Christ*, and are advis'd to do *what they do, as to the Lord; knowing that of the Lord they shall receive the Reward of Inheritance*. And this they would do well to keep in constant Memory; for this will amply recompence the greatest Labour, Care, and Industry that they can take. But of this I am to speak at large, when I have spoken to Truth and Faithfulness, and other good Qualities that are requir'd of Servants.

## DISCOURSE XV.

COLOSSIANS III. VERSES 22, 23, 24.

*Servants, obey in all things your Masters according to the Flesh; not with Eye-service, as Men-pleasers, but in Singleness of Heart, fearing God: And whatsoever you do, do it heartily, as unto the Lord, and not unto Men: Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the Reward of the Inheritance; for ye serve the Lord Christ.*

Having shewn, that Servants were commanded by God to obey their Masters, in all things, where they were at liberty by his own Laws, and by the Laws of their Superiours; and to perform their several Contracts and Agreements, to discharge all that they undertook to do, with Care, and Diligence, and Faithfulness and Honesty; and to be in all Respects as good Servants, as they would sometimes shew themselves, and appear to be to their Masters; knowing they were always in God's Sight, who will as certainly punish false and bad Servants, as he has promis'd to reward the good and faithful: I had only time to shew the Servants, that having given their Time and Labour to their Masters, by Agreement, for so much Profit and Advantage, Wages, Keeping, and Protection, as they thought them worth, or they could get; they would be unrighteous and unjust to wast that Time, unprofitably, in Idleness and Sloth, and to be unreasonably sparing of that Labour, that were truly none

of *theirs*, but their *Masters*, who paid them for them ; and added some few Motives farther to their Diligence and Industry, and Labour. I am now to proceed, and shew them, that they are also to discharge their Duty, and their Undertaking, with all Faithfulness and Honesty, with all the Truth and Justice in the World. They are hereby oblig'd to be as frugal and good Husbands for their Masters, as they can with Innocence and Honesty ; and they are oblig'd to defraud them of nothing.

*First*, Servants are oblig'd to be as frugal and good Husbands for their Masters, as they can with Innocence and Honesty, because they are to be every way as useful to them as is possible. This is the End and Intention of all Masters in entertaining Servants : They cannot do all things necessary themselves, therefore they trust others to do what is wanting ; they cannot always be at home, and yet their Busines must not be neglected : They cannot always be abroad, and yet their Busines may require Attendance ; therefore they entertain others to supply their Defects, that nothing may be wanting. But none of all these Ends are answered, where Faithfulness and Honesty are wanting : The Master's Absence is not at all supplied, where the Servant does not act as the Master would if he were present ; and the Master stays at home to his Loss, if his Servant, he employs abroad, be false and faithless. It is therefore evident, that the very Reason of being entertain'd as a Servant, implies a faithful, just, and honest Mind, one that can be trusted with the Master's

Concerns,

Concerns, and transact in his behalf as far as he permits him to go. He is to represent his Master when absent, and to be as solicitous for his Advantage, as 'tis presum'd he would himself be ; and when he is not so, he fails in part of his Duty, he does not so well discharge his Trust as he should.

No Servant is to be unjust, or hard, or unreasonable in behalf of his Master ; he is not, for his sake, to impose upon the Ignorance, Simplicity, or Want of Skill of those he deals with : He must no more think of recommending himself to his Master's Favour by over-reaching and deceiving others, than he must deceive or be unfaithful to his *Master* : He is bound to be as useful to him as he can ; but he must continue innocent and honest himself, he must reconcile the being serviceable to his Master with his own Good. And therefore, no Master must encourage such a Humour or Mistake in Servants, by shewing himself pleas'd, or content with any unjust Advantages they may have made in their Absence ; but must give them leave to deal no otherwise than they would deal themselves : They must not countenance or cherish such Proceedings in their Servants, as they would be ashamed of in themselves, and would not appear to have a hand in ; because they encourage thereby Injustice in another, and by Connivance make it their own Act and Deed. And if a Servant be wise, he will, for his own sake, make his Master's Rule *his* Rule of demanding ; for if that should be unreasonable, yet it is none of the Servant's Fault ; he is

not guilty of the Hardship or Injustice, it is his Master's; whereas, if Servants take a Liberty to set a higher Price than their own Masters set, who know their Busines best, they may, as it may happen, draw an unnecessary Guilt upon their own Heads, and be unjust and exacting to their Masters Profit, and their own Hazard: They must therefore be as good Husbands for their Masters, as they can with Innocence and Honesty be; but no farther.

In the next place, a Servant is oblig'd to be as little wastful and profuse of his Master's Goods and Substance, as is possible: He is tied to do him all the Good he can, and therefore, to be sure, no Mischief: Now all Waste and Profusion unnecessary is so much Loss and Damage, and therefore to be avoided; it is just so much Injury done to those who should be rather profited by them. And to keep themselves right in this matter, let them consider how they would behave themselves in *Eye-service*, and whilst trying to please Men. Let them, in the Absence of their Masters, behave themselves as carefully and frugally, as they would if they were present; or be as wasteful and profuse under the Sight and Knowledge of their Masters, as they are when they are ignorant and absent, and they may take their Approbation for Consent. But to appear frugal and careful in their Masters Sight, and in their Absence to be wasteful and profuse, is not only Eye-service and Hypocrify, but Falshood and Injustice. 'Tis doing their Masters Mischief, whilst they believe they are well serv'd. This is a Matter Servants are not so much

much aware of as they should be: They think it well enough, if they do not directly and plainly defraud their Masters of their Money, or their Substance; whereas there is little difference betwixt a luxurious and profuse Waste of their Masters Goods, which is not allow'd them, and defrauding them of something positively: The Masters are so much poorer, and are forc'd to be at so much greater Charge, than they expected to be; the Servants allow themselves more than the Masters think they can, or should afford them, and the Masters pay for that Profusion; and if it be unreasonable, it does not want much of a civil sort of Theft. If, indeed, it be so, that a sordid Spirit will not make such Allowance as is fit and reasonable to be made, it will be innocent enough to take what is convenient, though it be reckon'd Waste and Profusion by incompetent Judges; though it were better to forsake such Service, than act against the Master's Will and Order: But in all such Cases, where there is no necessity of this Nature, Waste and Profusion are faulty, and against the Duty of good Servants; it is what they never think fit to discover, but dissemble and conceal; they know it is not pleasing to any Master, and consequently know it ought not to be done by them.

*Lastly,* All Servants are to be exactly just and honest, and neither to take away their Money, or their Goods, any farther than they are reasonably presum'd to allow them. It is of all Thefts the worst, because it carries with it a *Breach of Trust*: From Violence and Fraud Men are to guard them-  
U 3 selves

selves with Weapons, and their Wits ; they are to look after themselves, they are threatned, and are bound to be aware, and wakeful. But neither of these sort of Robbers have engag'd especially to serve you faithfully and truly, or to do you no Injury, and therefore you depend not on them ; if they steal from you, they are only *violent* and *unjust*, they are not *false* and *treacherous* : Whereas the Servants, having given their Faith, their Promise and Engagement to be just and honest, are therefore trusted and employed by Masters ; and therefore all their Thefts are also Treacheries, and are aggravated by the Trust that is reposed in them. They are greater Villains than other People that steal more, because they have bound themselves to be exactly honest, and secure their Masters, to the best of their Abilities, from other People, and are the more confided in on that account.

If a Servant kill his Master, or a Wife her Husband, or a Priest his Bishop, it is not accounted by the Laws a simple *Murther*, but a sort of *Treason*, because these Parties owe Faith and Allegiance to the other : Their Crimes are rais'd proportionably to the Obligations they lay under to those Superiours, and their Cruelty as great and provoking, as the Trust and Confidence repos'd in such Relations was reasonable and just. It is much the same thing in lesser Instances ; the Falshood and Perfidiousness of Friends, Relations, and such as are entrusted, raises their Injustice to as great a height, as the Expectation of Faith and Honesty in them had been justly rais'd. And therefore,

fore, upon this account, there is more Wickedness in the Theft of *Servants*, than in that of *Strangers*; because it is (as is evident) accompanied with Breach of Trust, Falshood and Treachery, against which there is no guard.

Let, therefore, Servants, who at any time find themselves under the Temptation of defrauding their Masters, Mistresses, or any else that trust them, consider but these few things: *First*, That the Practice they are about, is evidently in itself very wicked. *Secondly*, That it is yet more wicked in them, because they are entrusted. *Thirdly*, That a Discovery of it here, is like to be their Ruin. And, *Lastly*, That, whether discover'd or no, it will lie as a Burthen on the Conscience, and will require Repentance and Satisfaction; or, without them, be sorely punish'd and aveng'd by God. *First*, The Practice they are venturing on, is evidently in itself wicked: It is Injustice to take from their Master what is his, and appropriate it to themselves, who have no Right to it. The first Principle of common Honesty, and indeed of all humane Converse, is that which our Saviour hath laid down in St. Matth. 7. 12. having first laid it down in all Men's Hearts, *Whatsoever ye would that Men should do unto you, even so do to them.* Now Theft is a manifest Violation of this Principle; it being certain, that no one can be willing that another should either take away, or detain from him what is his due, and to which the other has no right. In this especially consists the Pravity of Theft, as indeed of all other humane Acts, the doing that to another knowingly and

willingly, which he believes is grievous and injurious to him, and which he would think unreasonable to suffer at the other's hands: For here the Man does Mischief to another, against his own Conscience; he defrauds his Neighbour of something that he likes, and knows at the same time he should not do so; which is an Offence against his Brother's Good, and against that Light that God hath plac'd in him, and every Man, to guide and direct his Practice by. So that whatever can make an Act wicked, is found in *Stealing*; and it is not a Sin only because it is forbidden by God; but it is forbidden by God, because it is directly a Sin against the Good and Quiet of Mankind, and would destroy all Right, and subvert the Order of the World. As little therefore as People think of it, whenever they invade another Man's Right, either privily or openly, by taking away his Substance or his Money, they are undermining and subverting the Foundation of every Man's Security, destroying mutual Trust and Confidence, injuring their Neighbour, sinning against their own Conscience, and offending against both Divine and Humane Laws, and therefore needs must know that they do wickedly. Secondly, Servants, thus defrauding their Masters, are yet more wicked than other People doing the same things, because they also betray a Trust, as I have before shewn you. They could not have an Opportunity of doing Mischief, but by the greatest Dissimulation and Treachery imaginable; they counterfeit Justice, Truth and Honesty, and other good Qualities, by which they come to be trusted and confided

fided in, and by this Trust and Confidence they are enabled to do Mischief, and do it. By how much the les such Villany is expected from them, so much more villainous such Practice is in them: But of this before. The *third* Thing, Servants should consider, when under any Temptations to steal, either to satisfy their covetous Desires, or feed their Wantonnes and Luxury, is this, that a Discovery of it here is like to be their Ruin. Their very Livelihood does oftentimes depend upon their Credit; their Faithfulness and Honesty, are better to them, than their Hands and Feet; and all their Skill and Industry, their Strength and their Abilities would signify little, if they were famed for false and unjust; their other good Qualities would make them more suspected and avoided, rather than recommend them to Employment, if People could not trust them.

Masters will bear with many defects of Skill and Diligence, where they are sure the Servants are exactly just and honest; but where they know them false and unjust, they will have no regard to Industry and Labour; because they must be always on the watch; they must be looking still, that what they get them by their Industry and Labour, they should not lose by their Thievery; they must be always on their guard against those, whose Business it is to secure them from those Fears. There is nothing so necessary to a Servant, as the Reputation of being just and honest; nothing more certain to undo them, to all intents and purposes, than a bad Fame, and the Suspicion of false dealing with the Masters: And therefore, if they  
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acted only upon *prudential* Considerations, and consulted their own Benefit, they should of all things in the World be honest; when a Servant steals, he undermines the very Ground he stands upon; thinks he is only taking something from his Master, whilst he is taking away from himself the Means of his own Subsistence; for when his Frauds are once discover'd, he is absolutely ruined. It were therefore well, if such a Consideration as this were present to the Minds of Servants, under their Temptations to Injustice and Deceit: That there is all the danger in the World of a Discovery of their Thefts, sometime or other; and that whenever that is made, they shall, probably, be undone: And therefore, though their Wants and their Desires of what is none of theirs be very great and pressing, for the present, yet had they better go without it, even in point of Profit; because the Knowledge of such Fraud and Theft will quite disable them from ever making an Advantage more, by making them incapable of farther Service; for who will entertain a Thief and Villain? This is so sure a Consequence of Falshood in a Servant; that they have nothing to depend upon, but the Hopes of lying conceal'd, and that their Thefts will never be discover'd; which Hopes are yet so often disappointed, that very few, who have for any time been guilty of this Practice, do altogether escape the notice of their Masters: The Reputation of Servants is so dear and valuable, that many Masters will not charge them downright with that Sin, who yet are well enough assur'd themselves, that they are guilty of it:

it: And others have all cause to suspect, but for prudential Reasons never will accuse: And others see it well enough, but would not irritate too far, and make their Servants desperate by the Publication; hoping it will proceed no farther, but that the Grace of God will influence them to Honesty and Justice, and they will see the Folly and Naughtiness of all such Courses. Few Servants of any Note, or Continuance, walk so invisible and in the Clouds, in any of these wicked Practices, as they imagine; the Eyes of their Superiors are often on them, when they little think of it. And they will be deceiv'd, if they think that all are *ignorant*, who are *silent*; and that they are secure and unsuspected, because they are not charg'd or accus'd. This is the Rule that hired Servants may reasonably enough measure their Safety by: These methods of Indulgence and Forbearance would not be altogether so discreetly us'd by Masters, with respect to *them* who are so moveable and fugitive, and ought not to be born with for a Moment in their wicked Frauds; but they are proper enough with respect to Servants of a better Rank, and who are tied by Covenants to abide with them for Years. It is sometimes a piece of Charity, to endeavour, by a prudent Connivance and Concealment of their Faults of this kind, to reclaim them; because the divulging of them is likely enough to ruin them for ever, either by hardning them in Sin, or taking away their Credit, so that they never can be trusted or employed by any other. But this Concealment is to be so prudently manag'd, that

that it shall not by any means encourage them to proceed in any such wicked ways ; it would be well that Light enough should be let in upon the Servants, to let them see, 'tis possible their Masters may have some notice of their Practice, and yet not enough to convince them, that they actually know all : The Certainty of being discovered, may either harden them, and make them impudent, or may discourage them too much, and kill their Industry and Vigour quite ; whereas a light Suspicion may promote that Industry and Vigour, and give new Life, and set them on endeavouring, with new Diligence and Honesty, to make indeed amends for what is past, and to remove all causes of Suspicion (as the Servants fancy) for the future : And to the helping on this good Design, the Masters must not fail of frequently commanding to those Servants Faithfulness and Honesty, and true and just Proceedings ; for, by these means, they do their Duty, and tell the Servants of their Faults at the same time.

But *lastly*, Let the Servants consider, that whether or no this Discovery be made to *Men* of their Injustice and Falshood, yet *God* sees them continually ; they are always open to his Eye ; and their false Practice will always be a Burthen on their Conscience ; they must repent and make amends, or they will certainly be punish'd in the other World : This Consideration would prevent all Frauds and evil Practices in Servants, and keep them just and honest. What will it signify to conceal your Thefts and Falshood from your Masters,

Masters, and appear honest, when your own Heart assures you, you are false and wicked; and when your Conscience tells you, that God, who is to judge you at the last Day, knows you exactly; and that you cannot stray, even in a Thought, but he discerns, and marks it down? Try to conceal your Falshood from your self, and to corrupt your Memory from giving Evidence against you, that you may be at Peace and Quiet whilst you rob your Master: Use all your Art and Diligence to make your self believe, that what you take from him is yours, and that you have a Right and Title to it; that notwithstanding you dare not let him see you take the least Sum of Money, or smallest Quantity of Goods that is, yet he is willing you should do all that you do, and is consenting: Do but try to make these things easy to you, before you begin, and then you will not so much regard whether God sees or no, nor be so apprehensive of him, if he do.

But 'tis a Madness for you to venture upon stealing, purely in hopes of lying hid from one Man's Eyes, when at the same time you know you are your self false, and know that God sees and knows so too; and that the Torment of Guilt arises from a Man's own Conscience, and the Fear of Punishment from God's being Witness, as he is to be the Avenger of your secret Villanies. With the Fruits of your Injustice, you may gratify some vain or wicked Longing for the present; but when that is over, the Mind is immediately concern'd, vex'd, and disquieted at what is done; wishes it had been let it alone, is

afraid

afraid of Shame and Discovery, and knows that Fact must be repented of: This is much more uneasy than the Disappointment and Denial of those vain Desires had been at first. To have the Mind perpetually burthened with the Remembrance of its Guilt, to live under constant Reproaches of Conscience, for having wrong'd and defrauded one's Master, who deserv'd no such Usage, must needs be a greater Trouble, than it could be to have wanted that Content and Satisfaction which was purchas'd by those Thefts. And therefore, 'tis but a sad Bargain that a false Servant drives, that for so little Profit gives away the Peace and Quiet of his Mind. He knows that God sees him, and knows that he hath threatned to punish Falshood and Injustice with severe Punishment; yet this he also ventures. He is, and with Reason enough, afraid of the Shame or Punishment, that might follow a Discovery of his Sins, from his Master here on Earth; but is not terrified enough, even with the Certainty of God's discerning him continually, and Resolution of punishing all such wicked People. It were but fit he should be more afraid of him, who can cast both Soul and Body into Hell-fire.

These are some of the Considerations that would stand Servants in the greatest stead, if they were present to their Minds; they would shew them the Baseness and Unworthiness, as well as the Wickedness and Danger of being faithless and dishonest Servants; and that would be the likeliest means of keeping them just and exact. The *Third* and *Last* Thing to be spoken to, is the Reason,   
*Ground,*

Ground, and Foundation of the Servants paying all Obedience, and due Service to their Masters ; *Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the Reward of the Inheritance ; for ye serve the Lord Christ.* A good Servant may not only promise himself the natural, and the usual Rewards of an industrious, careful, just and faithful Service from his earthly Master, and the rest of the World ; but also the Reward of the Inheritance at God's hands, for he serves the *Lord Christ* ; one who, in the Form of a Servant, disdained not to live and die for the meanest of Mankind ; who hath promised God's Favour, both here and hereafter, to such as do their Duties in the meanest Stations faithfully and truly ; and one who is enabled to perform his Promises to them. Good Service does, like other good Performances, pay itself in great measure ; it carries its Reward with it ; it gains the Favour and Esteem of all People : Care and Diligence, and Faith and Honesty, make their Service very acceptable, and consequently very easy to themselves, and recommend them upon all Occasions : Those good Qualities raise them above their Fortune, and give them Reputation and Good-will, that make amends for the Meanness of their Condition. They give them Credit, moreover, with all that know them ; they, who have serv'd their Masters honestly and well, have laid to themselves a good Foundation for their own Self-Subsistence when they have occasion : The Neighbourhood will remember still their Diligence and Honesty, and promote their Good, by giving a good Report of them ; they will be forwarded

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by all, and trusted more than others of greater Skill, and deeper Insight. Faithfulness and Honesty give Servants better Credit, than Industry and Labour; because that People naturally expect a Blessing should attend them; they think, and not without some Reason, that God is interested in their Favour and Behalf; they will rather leave room for Providence, and trust to Honesty and Justice, than favour the Skilful and Industrious, although they know no harm by them, but are not certain of the other good Qualities: But when they are all join'd, there is then no question of their doing well.

These are Considerations that may help to alleviate their Misfortunes, and make their Condition easy to them. And, in truth, it is so well and wisely order'd by God, that every Condition of Life has something to make it not only tolerable, but comfortable enough, if People be not wanting to themselves; but will be careful, honest and religious, and discharge the Duties of it as they should. The State of Servitude is accounted the meanest and the most miserable of all others; but yet it is to be made easy, though not eligible. Servants may have more of the *Labours* of Life, but then they have less of the *Cares*, than other People; their *Bodies* are more fatigu'd and exercis'd, but their *Minds* are less perplex'd: They are only concern'd in *one Matter*, to do the Work that lies before them, whilst others have a *World* of things to think on, and look after. They have their Masters only to please; their Masters, may be, are to court and humour

humour all they deal with: They, generally speaking, have themselves alone to provide for; their Masters have Wives and Children, and Relations. Whatever Scarcity or Dearness happens, *they* find but little Alteration; whatever publick Mischiefs oppress a Nation, they feel but little of them: Changes of Government affect not them, that, may be, quite undo and overthrow their Masters: They contribute little to the supporting of the Publick, pay no Rates nor Taxes; lose no gainful Employments, suffer nothing by the Malice, or Insolence of Parties; undergo no Odium, Calumny or Slander: In a word, they are less distress'd and straitned, suffer less Hardships and Misfortunes, than any sort of People else above them. These are Conveniencies that generally attend Servants of the lowest Condition; and which they would do well to reflect on, now and then, as well to keep them the more easy, as to make them the more thankful, and that they might the better discern the Kindness of God's Providence in ordering Matters so, that, with these Advantages, their Condition, however mean and low it is to all Appearance, is yet upon the square, for Ease and Happiness of Mind, with that of many of their Masters.

But when, to all these natural Rewards, and these Advantages, some of them usual, and some inseparable from their Condition of Life, we also add *the Reward of the Inheritance* promis'd by God to the careful and industrious, the faithful, just, and honest Discharge of the Duty of Servants,

there can be nothing wanting to excite them to a due Performance of it.

Let them, therefore, for their Comfort and Encouragement, think upon these things. The State of Servitude is absolutely necessary, by the Order and Appointment of the wise Creator and Disposer of all things: The World could not be govern'd and maintain'd without it; and it is fallen to their share, to be instrumental to the publick Good in that Station; not for their *own*, nor for the Sins of their Fathers, but by that Uncertainty of Affairs, that God, for wise and good, but undiscover'd Reasons, permits to be in the World: It is no Token of his Anger and Displeasure, for he is willing they should avoid and fly that Fortune by their Industry and Care; and blesses them with Opportunities, and gives them the same Abilities, and natural Faculties, he gives the Governors and Princes of the World: It is not, therefore, any Sign of his Displeasure, that they are born, or became Servants; but so it happens, that they *are* so, and may free themselves from being so as soon as they can: He only commands them, that whilst they continue so, they should behave themselves as becomes their Condition, with all Submission and Humility, with all Obedience, Diligence and Industry, with Truth and Justice, Faithfulness and Honesty; which will make their Condition easy to themselves, and cause them to be well serv'd by others, whenever they emerge and get above it. But to shew how acceptable it is to him, and (because it is so necessary and

useful

useful to the World) to encourage it, he promises, that they, who behave themselves well in this Life, as *Servants*, shall be look'd upon, and treated as *Children*, in the Life to come; they shall have the *Reward of Inheritance*, which is, what properly belongs to God's Children. They may make themselves as happy as they can in this World, and the doing their Duty well is the most likely means of being so. But however that happen, God will not fail of making them happy hereafter; if they perform their Duty here, he will reward their Labours with eternal Rest and Quiet, and their Faith and Honesty with Rewards that never fail; they shall be happy in the glorious Liberty of the Sons of God, whatever Hardships, Trouble and Uneasiness they undergo, whatever want of Necessaries or Conveniencies they suffer; whatever Severities or cruel Inflections they endure *here*, by the tindue Rigour of their Masters and Superiours; *there* they shall have amends and Satisfaction made them in most ample manner: When once their Service is accomplish'd, they shall receive double at the Lord's Hands for all their Sufferings, and their undeserv'd Misfortunes. Let them support themselves, under the worst of their Condition, with this Hope and Expectation, and make it but a *reasonable* Hope, and a well-grounded Expectation, by discharging their Duty carefully and honestly as they should, and then they will live easily; they will have the Earnest of Heaven in a good Conscience before-hand, and live and be more happy than their Masters, if they are not also good Men.

There are two Things in this Divine Conduct worthy the remarking : *First*, That no Duty of Life, if well discharg'd, will go without Reward : It is not enough, that to be a good Relation in all respects, will make Men happy naturally, if all the World would do their Duty ; for if all Men did their Duty to each other, all Men would be happy : But because some People will be foolish and unreasonable, some ill-natur'd and perverse, some obstinately wicked and unjust ; and by these means a great many Duties be neglected, slighted and defied, to the great Damage and Mischief of others, to their Misfortune and great Suffering ; and that it is but natural, and seems reasonable, for one Party to neglect and omit the Duty which they owe *to* others, when they can see no tolerable Returns of what Duty is due to them *from* others : Because of this, because that such Omissions and Neglects are prejudicial to the Peace and Welfare of the World, God promises Rewards in another Life to the faithful and religious Dischargers of their Duties here, that will make amends for what is denied them here by Men's Unreasonableness or Malice, their Ingratitude or their great Wickedness ; so that no one need to be discourag'd now, as though his Labours would be in vain. Good Subjects may have lawless Governours, and good Children unnatural Parents, and good Wives unkind and faithless Husbands, and good Servants hard and unreasonable Masters : And so on the other hand, these several Superiours may have their corresponding Inferiours all as naught : But the Good of Mankind requires that all these mutual

tual Duties should be well perform'd ; and yet to do Good for Evil, is a huge Discouragement, and all these Duties would not be perform'd, unless Men had a hopeful Prospect of some Recompence, somewhere or other, to excite them to discharge them, and support them whilst so doing. This Prospect God lays open to all the World, by giving them the hopes of Heaven ; that happy Country, of which, they who will be his Children, in Obedience, shall, for reward thereof, be made Inheritors, and Heirs for ever,

The *other Thing* worthy remark, is this ; that whatever difference and distinction God commands or permits to be amongst Men, yet the greatest Favours and Blessings, the truest Dignities and Honours are common to all ; and those are Graces and Virtues here, and Happiness in Heaven hereafter. All Men cannot possibly be great and honourable, nor be possess'd of Places of Advantage ; all Men never can be rich ; all Men can't be Governours and Masters, nor great Traders, nor remarkable in any Faculty : But all Men may be just and honest, virtuous and religious ; all Men may live in God's Favour in this World, and may thereby be happy in the other : All Men cannot have Hous-es or Lands, Estates and Honours here ; but all may have their everlasting Dwellings, Houses not made with Hands, eternal in the Heavens. All Men may be Partakers of those Blessings, which God, who knows us best, knows fitteſt for us ; which he assures us are the trueſt Blessings, which make and keep us happiest here, and which he has de-

sign'd to crown us with hereafter. This is no little thing for Servants to consider, that however mean and despicable their Condition may appear in the sight of Men; yet that, in God's Eyes, who understands the value of his Creatures best, they are of equal worth with the Great and Noble; that he has given them Bodies full as beautiful and useful, Faculties of Mind as fine and good; made them as capable of being virtuous, and exercising Graces, has redeem'd them with the same precious Blood of Christ, opened the same Gates of Heaven, and prepar'd for them the same Glory. Only they must behave themselves wisely and well in their Condition, and as becomes those that serve the *Lord Christ*, i. e. who profess themselves Christians. He is the common Master of the whole World, and 'tis to him his Servants must look up; Him they must first and principally obey; and, under him, their several Masters and Superiours, as he gives them Order and Command: 'Tis he to whom the Father has committed all Power; the Dispensation of Rewards and Punishments is in his Hands; and 'tis by his Commands and Rules, that he will judge the World in Righteousness: Accordingly as Men obey his Laws, and discharge the several Duties of this Life, in their distinct Relations, they shall fare in the other, whether they be High or Low, Great or Small, Rich or Poor, Bond or Free, Master or Servant; *for with him there is no respect of Persons.*

## DISCOURSE XVI.

### COLOSSIANS IV. VERSE I.

*Masters, give unto your Servants that which is just and equal, knowing that ye also have a Master in Heaven.*

ST. Paul, in delivering the Duties that Superiors owe to their Inferiors, is very careful to preserve the Decorum of things; and generally uses such Terms as might seem to imply, that the Discharge of *their* Part is a Matter of mere Grace and Favour, rather than of Debt or Justice: *Rulers are not a Terror to good Works, but to the evil. Husbands, love your Wives. Fathers, provoke not your Children to Wrath. Masters, give unto your Servants that which is just and equal.* Whereas, to all Inferiors he speaks in a commanding louder Tone, *Let every Soul be subject to the higher Powers: Wives submit your selves to your own Husbands: Children obey your Parents, in all things; and Servants obey your Masters in all things.* But yet it would be a wrong Inference, that any one should make from hence, that therefore St. Paul intends to bind Inferiors to *their* Duties closelier and stronglier than Superiors to *theirs*; for his Purpose is to bind them both alike to the Discharge of all they owe: Only, the Nature of their several Duties requires a different Carriage and Behaviour in the Manner of discharging them; and indeed, the Way and Manner is sometimes Part of the Duty,

There is nothing more certain than that Superiours are oblig'd as much in Reason and Justice, and by God's Commands, to discharge what they owe to their Inferiours, as Inferiours are to discharge what they owe to their Superiours. For every Relation being built, and depending on a Contract, either suppos'd in Nature and Reason, or actually agreed upon and made betwixt the Parties related, upon what Terms they found convenient; it must needs be, that each Party is equally oblig'd to perform his Part of the Contract, upon which the Relation stands: For Justice and Religion know no Difference of Parties or Relations; with Them (as with their everlasting Fountain) there is no respect of Persons: They only have regard to what the Agreement is, and how it is perform'd. These Things have been fully spoken to, in considering the several Relations People stand to one another in; and therefore, having urg'd the Duty of Servants to their Masters, from Reason and God's Commands, it is but fit the Masters should be put in mind of what they owe their Servants, and that I choose to do from the Words of St. Paul in the Text; *Masters, give unto your Servants that which is just and equal, knowing that ye also have a Master in Heaven.* In which Words we have to consider, *First*, What is to be understood by *Just and Equal*. *Secondly*, The Reason here assign'd, why Masters should give to their Servants *that which is just and equal*; and that is, the Knowledge they have, *that they also have a Master in Heaven.*

*First,*

First, What is to be understood by *Just and Equal*. It is not indeed necessary, that when two or more Epithets of pretty near the same Sense and Signification are attributed to one and the same Thing or Person, there should be a different Sense sought out for each Epithet: The Scriptures use a great many Words to signify the same thing, but to signify it with more Force, and to make the deeper Impression on the Mind of the Reader; and so do all other Books as well as that; and so do all Men in their common Conversation, and cannot possibly avoid it: It does not signify that they intend to say different things, when they say that such a one is an *honest* and a *good* Man; they make no difference in their Minds betwixt an *honest* and a *good* Man, but they would only have it believ'd that he is *either*; and either of them serves their turn; and the using of both, is only to shew they are in earnest. And so there is no absolute Necessity, that to deal *justly* and *equally*, should signify different things, but only *very justly* or *very equally*: But if there be any difference intended by St. Paul, then it may be reasonable to think, that when Masters are bidden to be *just*, or *to give that which is just to their Servants*, they are bidden to give them that which is theirs by Contract and Agreement, that which is due in Law, as being bargain'd for, upon such and such Terms: And when they are bidden to give them that which is *equal*, they are bidden to deal fairly, honestly, and kindly with them, to give them what is their due in Reason and Conscience, although they have

have not formally contracted with them; to use them as well as other People, merciful and just, are suppos'd to use *theirs*, and as well as it may be suppos'd the Servants would have agreed for, had they suspected otherwise: In a word, to look upon themselves as much oblig'd in Reason and Conscience, as they would be by Bond and solemn Contract.

It is plain, there may be a great deal of difference betwixt *Justice* and *Equity*, if Men so please: Whilst they make their Contracts and Agreements the measure of *Justice*; and Reason and Conscience the Rule of determining what is *equal*. In this difference, we may well consider the Duty of Masters as somewhat different in being *just*, and being *equal*: And first, they are commanded to be *just*, to stand to their Agreements, to give their Servants what they have contracted for, whether it be Instruction, Wages, Maintenance or Cloathing, or whatever else is bargain'd for. Undoubtedly, whatever is agreed for, is in *Justice* due; and therefore, whatsoever Information or Instruction is requisite to qualify a Servant for the Calling and Profession he pretends to, is to be given him, as is due, and cannot be with-holden from him; it is the end which Servants of that sort propose and aim at, and the very Reason of putting themselves into a state of Servitude: It is that for which especially they contract; for which they give their Money, Time, and Labour; and therefore 'tis a piece of great Injustice, to conceal the Skill that properly belongs to them, and

is to make them Masters of their Calling: They cannot answer to their Contract, without the letting their Servants into the full Knowledge of their Business, according to the measure of their Understanding and Capacity; it is as much their due, as their daily Food, and detain'd with equal, if not greater Injury.

A Master therefore is both faithless and unjust, that either, through Design, Envy or Carelessness, suffers his Servant to continue ignorant and unskilful in the way of his Profession, which he agreed and covenanted to make him understand; he breaks his Covenant, and answers not his Trust, by keeping back the Skill that is necessary to make his Servant what he aims at. The Servant is all the while deceiv'd, and loses the only thing he bargain'd for, expected, and desir'd, and for which he pledg'd his Faith and Service. This is *one* way of refusing to give to Servants *that which is just*, and that a very great and mischievous one.

*Another* is of denying them their Wages, the with-holding back the Price and Reward of their Service, that which they bargain'd and agreed for; which is as much the Servant's due, as any thing the Master has is his own; he has already paid for it, and to defraud him of it, is to rob him of just as much, It is indeed in the Master's keeping, but it is no more *his*, than any Stranger's: The Master sold it for so much Time and Labour, as the Servant and he agreed for, which being paid for by the Servant's Work, it is then his own. A Master

may

may as well agree for Goods with any Customer, and receive the Price of them beforehand, and after that detain the Goods also, as take his Servant's Time and Labour first, and then deny him his appointed Wages. There is nothing plainer, and better understood, than the Reasonableness and Justice of standing to Agreements, such especially as were deliberately made, and which have been perform'd without Fraud on the one part; and yet there is Reason to think this part of Justice is very ill practis'd by many Masters to their Servants, as if they did not owe the same to *them*, as to their Betters. Some such idle Fancy must possess them, that Superiours are not equally oblig'd by contracting with Inferiours, as they are with Equals; for otherwise they would be as just to Servants, as to any one else. That which may make one easily conjecture thus, is, that the higher we go, the better Quality and Fashion People are of, the more they are observ'd to offend against this part of Justice, the less regard they have to the Discharge of what is due by Contract to their Servants. So that that, which should be both to their Honour and Advantage (the serving great People) turns to their greater Loss and Mischief; they are thereby only more injur'd and oppress'd: For this additional Guilt the Honour and great Quality of Masters add to *Injustice*, that they make it also Oppression. It is *Injustice* to deny what is the Servant's due; but when the Servants cannot, by the legal common Courses, obtain that due, through the great Power and Titles of their Masters,

ters, then are they also *oppress'd* as well as *wrong'd*. It were some Shame to say, that either Law, or Custom should encourage, or should justify Oppression; for Justice is to sit the highest in the World.

It might contribute to the doing this sort of Justice, to consider, that they who are backwardest to do it, are commonly the worst serv'd; they are often met with, tho' in a very faulty manner: For whilst the Servants live *with* them, they commonly live *upon* them; *i. e.* they find out ways to pay themselves with Interest; but it is by Frauds and Villanies, by allowing great Rates to such as deal with them, by being Ill-husbands for them, by going Shares with those that gain from them, and by a world of little Courses that are false and wicked: One Injustice begets another: And though an unjust Master will not *excuse* a false and wicked Servant, yet he oft *occasions* it, by shewing him the way, and putting him upon some kind of Necessity of living by such Shifts: And therefore the surest way of being well serv'd, is to be very just, to stand exactly to Agreements, and to give them their own; that makes them diligent and faithful, and gives them no Temptation to be otherwise: Whereas, when that which of Right belongs to them is denied them, they *first* imagine they may do themselves Justice, and *then*, by degrees, they give themselves great Reparations. Thus, by being ill us'd, they become wicked. Against this Injustice, God, in the Scriptures, gives Men frequent warning. Thus in *Lev. 19. 13.*

and

and Deut. 24. 14. *Thou shalt not oppress an hired Servant, that is poor and needy, whether he be of thy Brethren, or of thy Strangers that are in thy Land within thy Gates.* At his day thou shalt give him his Hire, neither shall the Sun go down upon it; for he is poor, and setteth his Heart upon it, lest he cry against thee to the Lord, and it be Sin unto thee. The Hardship is indeed the greater, in detaining the Wages of poor Men who daily subsist by their Labours; but the Injustice is the same, whether you bargain by the Day or Year, in detaining their Hire from them. So in Jer. 22. 13. *Woe unto him that buildeth his House by Unrighteousness, and his Chambers by wrong; that useth his Neighbours Service without Wages, and giveth him not for his Work.* Undoubtedly, this Woe belongs to all that defraud their Servants of their Wages, for they are Neighbours in the Scripture Sense of that Word; and they receive the profit and advantage of their Work and Service, and therefore ought to pay them for the same. So saith St. James, ver. 5. 4. *Behold, the Hire of the Labourers, who have reaped down your Fields, which is of you kept back by Fraud, crieth; and their Cries have entred into the Ears of the Lord of Sabbaoth.* The keeping back the Hire of other, and all Labourers, as well as Reapers, will cry unto God, and enter into his Ears; the Cruelty and Injustice is all alike, and the Offence the same: And therefore they, who make Conscience of paying the Day-labourers, should also know they are oblig'd to deal as justly by their Menial-servants, who also labour

for them day by day. It is the same Case with Food and Rayment, with any Profit or Convenience that the Servant has contracted for; it is in Justice due to him, and must not be withhelden from him. When he has earn'd it, it is *his*, and his Inability of recovering it, by Might, or Law, makes it not less his due, than if he were actually possess'd of it. And the Injustice of detaining from Inferiours, weak and helpless, is rais'd and aggravated by that Consideration, because there is Insolence and Unmercifulnes joyn'd with it. When they have nothing to oppose or answer to the Right and Justice of the Servants and Inferiours Claim, they have recourse to Power and Might; they are richer, greater, and have more Friends and Interest, and by their help they trample over Justice: Nothing can betray a wiser Mind than this, to oppres the weak and helpless, either because they are ignorant of the Means of recovering their Dues, or unable to go through the Trouble, or bear the Charge of doing it: This is to take the advantage of Men's Weaknes, which ought much rather to provoke their Pity and Compassion, and make them Friends and Patrons.

These, and whatever else Particulars are due to Servants by Contract and Agreement, may well be thought meant and intended by St. Paul, when he commands the Masters to give to Servants that which is *Just*.

The other part of what he commands, is to give them that which is *Equal*, *i.e.* to deal fairly, honestly, and kindly with them, to give them that

that which is their due in Reason and Conscience, although they have not formally contracted for it: And this may include all the Particulars abovementioned, which were due in Justice, and recoverable by the force of Law; for a Man may be as unjust in detaining that which the Law would not compel him to deliver, as that which it would force from him, and give to the true Owner. It is the Reason and Benefit of the Contract, that makes it at first binding, and obliges the Conscience to make it good, before the Penalty of Laws come to be considered: If one Man borrows Money of another, he knows he is oblig'd in Conscience to repay him, although he is not under formal Bonds to do it; the Benefit he receives he knows is naturally conditional, and requires the being answered in the like kind, which he on his part promises, and the other expects: The Bond, that afterwards succeeds, is to constrain him to do that Justice, which his own Conscience told him he must do, without Constraint. It is therefore evident, that where the Reason and Benefit of a Contract appear, there the Conscience is equally oblig'd to stand to it, and make it good, as if it were never so formally made in Words, and tied by Penalties: For tho' all Contracts naturally suppose mutual Promises and Engagements; yet the Bottom and Foundation of those Promises is the Sense of some Benefit receiv'd, or the Hope and Presumption of some *to be* receiv'd; and therefore that is the Obligation at the bottom. And therefore, there is a *presum'd* Contract, wherever the beneficial Effects of one appear, although

though there be no formal one actually made. If therefore a Master receive the advantage of his Servant's Time and Labour, he is oblig'd in Conscience to make him a sufficient Recompence, although there were no Bargain formally made between them: This the Conscience says is *equal*, because the Reason and Benefits of a Contract visibly appear. This Rule is not only applicable to *Masters* with regard to their Servants, but indeed to all Mankind with respect to one another. The Mind may be in Chains and Fettered, where the Body is, and must be free; the Conscience often is oblig'd, where the Forms of Justice can take no hold on him, so that there are more Prisoners than we see or think of: Many that walk at liberty, and seem to be as free as the Air they breath in, that yet know within themselves, that they are truly Prisoners, and due to Justice, though they elude it by some Slight or Falshood. They know they are oblig'd in Reason and Justice, and good Conscience, to discharge a great many Debts, which yet no Evidence, no Judge or Jury can extort from them: Their Credit, may be, was so great, that they gave no Bond: Their reputed Honesty was such, that Men were glad to deal with them upon their own Terms: Or else they mortgag'd doubly, gave false Security, or so contriv'd their Obligations, that they should be insignificant when tried. The Justice of the Laws pursues with Hatred and Abhorrence all these wicked Proceedings; but the Subtilty of wicked and designing People is too much for them; they triumph

in her Weakness and their own Skill, and, in contempt of her, walk at great liberty: But 'tis the Liberty of *Body* only; for the *Mind* is all that while in *Bonds*, and knows its Obligations, knows what is truly just and equal, with respect to Reason and Conscience, however it escape the Cognizance or Penalties of Laws.

But by *Equal* is also to be understood such Usage and Treatment as is fair, good natur'd, and humane; to make their Lives as easy as we can, consistently with the Performance of their Duty, and our Business; and therefore not to pursue them with perpetual Contumely and Reproach, nor use them as we do our Beasts of Burthen. It is one of the worst ways in the World of shewing our Superiority, by giving ill Language, and Words that become no body to receive. The Condition of Servitude is of it self grievous enough, without the additional Evil of being, on all Occasions, treated with Contempt and Scorn: And if the Truth were known, the Service is not the better perform'd for such perpetual Chidings and Upbraiding, especially in so unseemly a manner. The Nature of our Country is not so vile and disingenuous, as always to want such galling Spurs, and sharp Excitements to the Performance of the Servants Duties. Good Words at least should be the first Experiment that all Superiors should make, and be as long continued as they can, they are so handsome and becoming reasonable and religious People; and to be sure those Servants that perform their Duty, do it better with good Words, and live more

com-

comfortably; and without doubt those Means are fittest to be us'd, that best attain their End, with the Ease and Pleasure of both Parties:

To this Comfort of good Words, must also be added *good Usage*; Masters must not be over-rigorous in their Punishments, when Servants are faulty, but should inflict them with Deliberation, good Intention, and Compassion. Anger produces often sad Effects, even where it prompts the *Parents* to correct the *Children*; and therefore must be carefully attended to, where that Affection is not present to restrain them from exceeding the bounds of Moderation: This is also to give them what is *Equal*. The Masters owe their Servants Admonition and Reproof when they are found faulty, and Punishments proportion'd to their Guilt. To this Moderation Masters also are to have regard in their Commands and Impositions; they must not oppress them with immoderate Tasks and Labour, but are to have a merciful respect to the Capacity, Ability and Strength of Servants. It was one Occasion of the Institution of the Sabbath to the *Jews*, that Servants might be relieved, and not consume a miserable Life in constant and continued Labours.

It is true, that the Servant's Time and Labour are the Masters, and he is to give them to no one's use besides: But yet they are to be exacted with Equity and Reason. Men must not wear out the Heart, nor make all wast they can of what is truly let out to them, although it be not expressly covenanted against; because it is

presum'd in Reason and good Sense, that others are to succeed in the Possession of those Lands. A Servant is not so to be consum'd with Toil, as to be made unfit for other, or for farther Service: He is not presum'd to consent to such a Bargain, though all his Time and Labour still belongs to his Master. They are therefore very much to blame, that have no Consideration of their Servants, that never think they do enough, but are continually charging them with new Tasks, without any Rest or Intermission: This is not dealing *equally* with them.

But furthermore, under this Head may well be comprehended all other Care that is fit to be taken of them, both in their Health and Sickness; the giving them good Advice, and setting them a good Example, affording them Opportunities of serving God, both at home and abroad; the instructing them according to their Leisure and Abilities in the common Rules of Honesty and Justice, Truth and Faithfulness; exciting them to Diligence and Industry, and encouraging them therein; and, in a word, to make them virtuous and religious, that they may be as useful in the World as they can; and to see, in case of Sickness, that they want not what is fitting their Condition: These are Courses that are likely to make good Servants, and to encourage such as are so, and to oblige them to serve their Masters with the greatest Care and Affection possible; there being none of so low and abject a Spirit, but who will strive to make amends for kind, good-natur'd Usage.

All these Particulars may well be understood to be injoyed by St. Paul, when he would have the Masters give their Servants *that which is just and equal.*

The Reason here assign'd, why they should do so, is next to be consider'd; and that is, *knowing that ye also have a Master in Heaven.* To make which Words a binding Reason to Masters, they are to contain either a Promise of Encouragement to such as give to their Servants *that which is just and equal*, or Threatning to such as shall neglect the doing it. And considering who this Master is, the Lord Christ; he that shall judge the quick and dead, with whom there is no respect of Persons, who is to punish and reward: Considering this, 'tis certain that the Words intend them both; namely, an Encouragement to those that shall comply with the Command, and Threatning to such as shall neglect it. As they contain an Encouragement, they may be understood thus: *Masters, give to your Servants that which is just and equal, knowing, or rememb'reing, that ye have also a Master in Heaven:* One from whom you expect the just Performance of all those great and precious Promises, which, of his Grace and Goodnes, he at any time hath made to you: And one from whom you look for all the Mercies and Benefits, both Temporal and Spiritual, that are either fit for him to give, or for you to receiye: And one who hath promised to be a bounteous Master to all his faithful and obedient Servants, to shew Mercy to such as shew Mercy to others: He took upon himself the Form

of a Servant, and liyed a mean precarious Life, depending, for ought that appears, upon the Charity and Friendship of good People for his Subsistence, and on the Entertainments his Doctrine gain'd him; and therefore hath exempted that, and every other poor and mean Condition, from Contumely and Reproach among Christians, and made them rather, for his sake, Objects of great Pity and Compassion. *Behold*, saith our Saviour, *I am among you, as he that serveth*, not only to give his Disciples an Example of Humility and Condescension, now and then, on just Occasions, below their outward State and Quality, when it is to be serviceable to one another; but to sanctify all Conditions of Life, and to shew the World, that God looks not with Man's Eyes, that he has no respect to Persons, that he regards not Birth and Fortune, Quality and Title; but that the meanest People in the World are acceptable with him, if they obey his Laws, and do his Will: That it is Goodness, Virtue and Religion, that recommend Men to his Favour, and nothing else; of which the Poor and Servants of this World are full as capable, as the Rich and Mighty, and most honourable Masters. And as he hath made them Partakers of the same Grace here, and capable of the same Glory hereafter, so he commands them to be treated here with all the Mercy and Humanity that their Condition is capable of receiving; upon this Principle, no doubt, that all the World should be as happy as they can: And this is that, that every single Person in the World should govern himself by, to make

make each single Creature in the World as easy and as happy as he can, in the Condition he is in; not to molest, afflict, or injure any one; but to do all Justice, and to shew all Mercy we are able, consistent with our own Benefit, and that of those to whom we are more immediately related. Our *Master*, *that is in Heaven*, hath, by his Laws, consulted better the Ease and Benefit of all Inferior Relations of Men, than either *Jewish*, *Greek*, or *Roman* Lawgivers have ever done; their Condition is much more happy under Christianity, than any other Dispensation. The State of Subjects under their Princes, the Subjection of Wives to their Husbands, of Children to their Parents, of Servants to their Masters, is abundantly more easy by the Rules and Principles of that Religion, than to any People else, *i. e.* Christianity hath provided better for their Ease and Comfort, if those that are concern'd will follow its Directions. Christianity does not barely leave these Things to the Civil Laws and Customs of the Country, but it gives new Orders in their Favour; where Laws and Customs are unrighteous, cruel, and unreasonable against them, it mitigates them, and commands its Profelites to change them for good-natur'd, just, and reasonable one's: In a word, Christianity is the best Religion that ever was, for the Good of Mankind; it best secures the Rights and Honours, Priviledges and Advantages of all Superiors, and best consults the Ease and Happiness of all Inferiors, by the most strict and indispensible Obligations it lays on all Men, to be exceed-

ing just and merciful, and to discharge their several Duties to each other with the utmost Care and Faithfulness that can be. And this it does, beyond all other Dispensations, by Promises of Grace and Favour here, and mighty Recompences in the World to come, of which our Lord and Master is to be the Judge and sole Dispenser.

This End it also aims at, and pursues, by the Threatnings of the greatest Punishment to such as shall neglect their several Duties; for that is also implied in the Words of the Text, *Knowing that ye also have a Master that is in Heaven.* Do what becomes you to your Servants; give them that which is just and equal, rememb'ring that ye also have a Master in Heaven, that commands you so to do, and who will also, one Day, take account how ye have done it. With this your Master there is no respect of Persons; the Bond and Free are all alike to him; the meanest Servant is as dear to him, as the most honourable Master: All shall be judg'd alike, and most impartially: The false and disobedient Servants shall be punish'd, and so shall all unjust and cruel Masters.

Now what can shew the Excellence and Usefulness of the Christian Religion better, than the Care it takes to secure the Happiness of all the World, by securing the Duties of all Relations, Natural and Civil, by such Rewards and Punishments? Be but a just and good Prince, and you shall be belov'd and fear'd by all your Subjects; be an obedient Subject, and you shall live secure; if not, expect the Rods and Axes. Be a good Father,

ther, and you shall have obedient Children, and receive great Comfort from them: Be a good Son, and you shall be belov'd by your Parents, and all that know you: Be disobedient and rebellious, and you shall be rejected, disinherited, imprison'd, and, it may be, punish'd farther. Be a good Husband, and you shall live easily, and be belov'd and honour'd by your Wife; be an unkind or false one, and you shall be hated and ill spoken of. Be a good Wife, and you shall be belov'd and prais'd; be a bad one, you shall be ill us'd, or else divorced. Be a good Master, and you shall be well serv'd; be an unjust and cruel one, and all shall hate you, and fly from you. Be a good Servant, and you shall be well us'd; be a bad and faithless one, and expect the Mill, the Mines, or a Halter. These are the Hopes, and these the Fears, that other Laws and Dispensations hold out; these are the Promises, and these the Threats that are to bind Men to their several Duties, and to deter them from neglecting them: But what Security is this, to what the Christian Doctrine offers; when to the faithful, just, and true Discharge of all Men's Duties, it offers all the natural Advantages of doing well, and everlasting Life in Happiness besides? And to the free Contempt and Neglect of all these several Duties, to all the natural Inconveniences and Mischiefs of doing ill, it threatens endless and amazing Punishments? What strange Encouragements to good Morality are these? What strange Discouragements to bad? Allow it but (as well you may) that the true and honest Discharge of every

every Man's Duty to each other, in the Relation they stand in, is the surest Way of making and keeping all Men easy and happy throughout the World, and you will see that nothing ever so consulted the Good of all Mankind, even in this Life, as the Christian Religion. For had the Legislator, and the Moralists of all Countries and all Ages, delivered the same Lessons with those of Christ; yet, not being able to bring to light this Immortality of Life in Pleasure, or in Pain, they must have talked but finely to little purpose; and all their Laws have wanted the most powerful Sanction. This also shews how great a Part (almost indeed the Whole) of true Religion, good Morality makes up, to which the Rewards discovered by especial Revelation are affixt, and to the Neglect of which the Punishments reveal'd are all threatned. Let no one, therefore, think it so indifferent a thing, whether they well or ill discharge the Duties of their several Relations; for if Religion were divided into Parts, the Duties that we owe to one another, would make up five of six; and Heaven and Hell, we see, are to reward their good Performance, and punish the Neglect of them. And let a Man take care to have a due Regard to Justice, if a Magistrate, and live in obedience to the Laws as a good Subject, approve himself a dutiful Son to his Parents, and a good Parent to his Children; a faithful and good-natur'd careful Husband to his Wife; a just and equal Master to his Servants, and a good, diligent and honest Servant to his Masters; let him discharge with Care and a good Conscience the Duties

Duties of his different Relations, and see how much he will want of being a good Christian: If these were well perform'd, the rest of our Religion would go down with ease; the Scruples and Objections made to *Doctrines* would go near to vanish, if our disorderly Affections and our Will were once subdued to Reason, and we were truly just and honest Men; and, to speak in fashion, *Men of great Probity, and good Morals*: For that indeed is the very Life and Substance of Christ's Religion; and in the Sense and full Perswasion of this, I have been so long insisting on the several Duties that we owe to one another, and with which I have now done,

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*F I N I S.*

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Prize of this diligent Research, and see how  
much we will want of being a good Christian: If  
people were well behaved, the last of our Reli-  
gion would go down rapidly; the Scribes and  
Opposition made to Degradation, would go next to  
nothing; if the out-door geishas and out-  
womans of the town happened to Rester, and we were truly  
but bad people Men; and, to lesser in less  
Men of the town, and bad Scribes of Christians;  
indeed is the very life and soul of the  
Religion; and in the scope and full Proliferation of  
this, I have seen to good influence on the lowest  
Prize I prize we owe to the Scribes, and with

which I prize now more. We indeed the  
good Moral sense to which the  
discovered by the first Revelation we owe  
the New Testament, and the first of which

THREE  
SERMONS  
ON  
*SELF-MURTHER.*

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By WILLIAM Lord Bishop of *ELY.*

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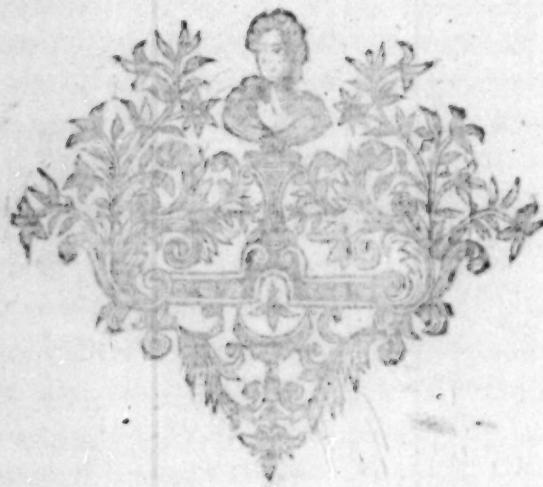
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Printed for John Hooke, at the *Flower-de-luce*,  
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street. MDCCXVI.

THE  
SERMONS  
ON  
SERVANT-MURTHER

BY WILLIAM LONG BISHOP OF EX



1700 AD

Printed for John Hooper, at the Lower-End  
of Cheapside, 1700. In the Church of St. Dunstan's, in Fleet  
Street. MDCCLXII.

# SEMON I.

## II SAMUEL XVII. VERSE 23.

*And when Ahithophel saw that his Counsel was not followed, he saddled his Ass, and arose, and gat him home to his House, to his City, and put his Household in order, and hang'd himself, and died, and was buried in the Sepulchre of his Father.*

**T**hese Words contain a plain Account of what happen'd to a most unfortunate and wicked Man; and to make them as useful as I can, I think it will be best to treat of them in this Order: *First*, To speak to the disastrous End *Ahitophel* came to, *he hang'd himself, and died*. *Secondly*, To the Occasion of it, *he saw that his Counsel was not followed*. *Thirdly*, Something previous to his Execution, *he arose, gat him home to his House, to his City, and put his Household in order*: And *Fourthly*, to what followed, *he was buried in the Sepulchre of his Father*.

*First*, The disastrous End that *Ahitophel* came to, was, that *he hang'd himself*. This was a Death of Infamy, and allotted by the Laws to great Malefactors: And therefore it is said, *Deut. 21. 23. He that is hanged, is accursed of God*; not for dying, but for deserving to die in that manner. It was his Crime, not Punishment, that made him *accursed of God*: His being hang'd on a Tree, was to denote some great Offence that deserv'd that Punishment, and for which

which he had incur'd the Divine Displeasure. And so, when our Saviour is said to be made a Curse for us, by dying on the Cross (which St. Peter, in *Acts 10. 39.* calls *hanging on a Tree*) it is with respect to this Sentence of the Law in *Deut.* He bare our Sins, and was put to the like Death, and underwent the like Ignominy with those Offenders, who, under the Law, were *accursed of God.* This Death *Ahitophel* underwent, not by any Sentence of Law, but by his Choice, upon some private Consideration; and tho' he avoided the Ignominy of such a Sentence, yet the Ignominy of the Death was not to be avoided; because it was accounted an ignominious and accursed Death, and was appointed for notorious Malefactors. But the Use we may make of his choosing this particular, rather than any other way of dying, is very little, unless we may observe, how far the wisest Men are blinded by their Passions, when, to avoid some Shame, they run into Courses that directly lead to it. The Thing to be principally considered, is, not why he died in *this* manner, but why he died at all; what Right he had to put an end to his Life, by hanging himself: For, to do this, without blame, a Man must be at perfect liberty both by the Laws of God and Man, and independent on them both: There must be no Obligation on him, either from the Law of Nature and right Reason, or from the revealed Law of God, or from his lawful Superiors upon Earth: For if any of these with-hold his Hands, he cannot innocently lay them on himself. Now, as to the Law of

of Nature condemning this Practice, I do not so much appeal to that innate Love of Life, and Fear of Death, which is generally implanted in all Men's Hearts (for these Men, being freed from these Affections, will deny their Power) as to that general Abhorrence that all Nations of the World have had that Practice in: And the more wise, more civil and polite those Nations have been esteem'd, the more they have condemn'd it; which if it be not a Proof of the Reasonableness of any Doctrine, we shall never find what is. And though there be a great many Examples, both of *Greeks* and *Romans*, even in their best times, that fell by their own Hands, upon some pressing Extremities; yet their *Rules*, their *Laws*, and their *Reasonings*, were all against it. And those Examples against their Rules, are of no more Authority to countenance such a Practice, than the Example of Men committing any *other* Wickedness, will countenance such other Wickedness, against their Reason, and against express Command of God. Their Rules, and their Laws were against Adultery, and Rapes, and Violence, Oppression, Exaction and all Injustice; and yet their great ones were guilty of them all, when they found their Opportunities: And their Historians often mention them without Reproach or Blame; and some were still found, that would call their impure Liberties, *Gallantries*, and fine Freedoms; and their Oppressions, *Conquests*; and their unjust Invasions of Kingdoms, glorious *Ambition*, and Enlargement of Empire. But a Man would be much mistaken, if he thought that this

was the Judgment of their wise and sober Writers, or of the grave and serious Part that govern'd them; or that such Practices were countenanced by their Laws, and Rules of living. This I mention, to obviate that Objection, that many Passages are found in the Writings of these People, in Commendation of such, as, to avoid some great Calamity, have put an end to their Lives by their own Hands; for that will always happen, that Men of loose Principles should have false Notions of Liberty, and Honour, and great Courage, and should accordingly commend such Practice as is conformable to such loose Principles. And we, who live in an Age, where every thing is justified by some poor Writer or another, though never so extravagant, impious, and unreasonable, should not be hard to believe, that so it has been heretofore with other People, and so will be hereafter: And yet we should be loth to have Posterity believe, that this was the Sense, the Reason, the Understanding, and the Judgment of our Age, in the general. We must consult the wise, the sober, and the serious Writers of the Times, the Laws, the Rules, and Reasonings of the grave and governing part of a Nation, to understand their true Sense of Matters of Moment: And from them we shall learn, that *Self-Murther* was evermore an abhorred Practice among them; that whatever pretence it made to great Honour, Magnanimity and Courage, it was indeed but an Effect of Cowardice and Fear, and a Mark of a poor impatient Spirit, that funk under the common Calamities of

of Life, and knew not how to bear Misfortunes ; that it was Disobedience and Impiety, to desert the Station, that their Supreme Commander give them to maintain, and act apparently against their Sovereign's Order. I trouble you not with the Particulars, because there is no need : 'Tis certain, the considering, virtuous, and religious Part of Mankind have all along been of this Opinion, and condemn'd the Practice of those, who, to free themselves from some Misfortunes, have ended their Days, before their Time, by Violence ; and it would be no great wonder, if more Examples, and more Defenders of this Practice were found among the *Gentiles*, than there are ; because they were, many of them, *Atheists*, or Believers in so many Gods, that it almost came to the same thing : And to them, who acknowledge no Supreme Power , who governs the World, and to whom Men are accountable for what they do, 'tis a vain thing to talk of the Laws of Nature, and right Reason ; for let them be never so plain and clear, they will go for nothing, where they may be transgres'd without Fear of being vindicated by any Power, or Punishment. And, doubtless, if a Man believes he has no Body hereafter to account to, he will fear no Master or Superiour here, from whom he knows he can escape so easily, by Death. But we are now supposing the Belief of God, and upon that Bottom affirm, that a Man cannot be so much Master of his Life, as to throw it away at pleasure, without regard to that Will of his, which appears to be written in our Hearts, for-

bidding such a Practice; of which, the concurring Consent of the wisest Lawgivers, and Writers of the wisest and most civiliz'd People, of all Ages, is, I think, one very good Proof.

As to any Declaration of the Will of God, in this Particular, in the written Revelation; it is not to be expected there should be a single Prohibition of every single Sin, that a Man can commit; 'tis sufficient, if there be general Prohibitions, that include them all. And such is, in this Case, that general one, of, *Thou shalt do no Murther*; which secures the Life of every Man and Woman in the World, whose Life is not obnoxious, by some other Command, to be taken away: As, the Laws, for Instance, punish *Theft*, and other Crimes with Death, notwithstanding the *sixth Commandment*; because Men commit other Offences, to which Death is due by other Laws of equal Force with the Law against Murther. But it is Murther still, to take away any one's Life, and an Offence against the *sixth Commandment*, if that Life be not forfeited by some other Law of equal Force and Obligation with this against Murther.

But these Commands do all respect our *Neighbour* only; and they, who murther themselves, know and confess they are tied by the *sixth Commandment*, not to murther any one else. To this it may be answer'd, that this is downright to beg the Question in hand; for if the Letter and the Sense of the Command will reach a Man's self, as well as his *Neighbour*, why should not the Commandment include our selves?

selves? A Man is murthered, when he murthers himself, and the Command prohibits Murther: And though the Commandments of the *second Table* do especially refer to our Neighbour, yet not exclusively of our selves: We may not bear false Witness against ourselves, no more than against our Neighbour; because the Truth is hurt thereby, and some Wrong done by such a Testimony; so that where it is possible for the Commandments to take in our own Case, there they will do so, as well as our Neighbour's. But to make the matter plain, let it be taken for supposed, that both the sixth and the rest of the Commandments of the *second Table* respect our Neighbour only; and we may ask, whether by *Neighbour*, is not to be understood any one that is truly injur'd by our Offence, as well as the Party most immediately concern'd? The seventh Commandment, for Example, is, *Thou shalt not commit Adultery*. When a wicked Man falls into this Commission, and abuses his Neighbour's Bed, does he only offend against the Partner of his Sin, the adulterous Woman, or also, against the injur'd Husband? Does he not also offend against his own Wife, if he have one? Does he not offend against the Parents and Relations also of his wicked Accomplice, dis honouring their Name, and House; and filling the Family with Grief, and Shame, and much Confusion? When a Man *steals*, against the *eighth Commandment*, does he only offend against the Party whom he immediately wrongs, or also against those who suffer by that Wrong? When one bears false Testimony, against the *ninth Commandment*,

mandment, and thereby defeats a Man's Title to his Estate, his Office, or Employ, does he not offend against the Wife and Children of that Man, who liyed by that Estate, or Office, or Employ, as well as against the Man and Master of that Family? You see then that the Commandment respects more than *one* Party, under the notion of *Neighbour*, even *all* that are injur'd by that Transgression. Now I ask, whether this does not happen also, in breaking the sixth Commandment, by murthering one's Neighbour? Are not the Wife and Children, and the Family, made very miserable by such a Death? And I ask again, whether the same Mischief does not follow to one's *own* Family, by a Self-Murther, as to another Family, by the Murther of another? And if it do, 'tis certain that the sixth Commandment forbids Self-Murther, as sure as it does the Murther of another; because it forbids the *Consequences* of Self-Murther (which are Shame, and Grief, and Los, and Pain, and Injury, and all sorts of Mischiefs) as certainly as it forbids the Consequences of murthering any one besides; because a Man is no more at liberty to injure and afflict his own House and Relations, than the House and Relations of a Stranger. If therefore he offend against his *Neighbour*, even all that are injured by his Offence, as well as the single Party injur'd more immediately; 'tis manifest he also offends against his *Neighbour*, even all his own House, Relations, and Dependents, by taking away his own Life; since (as I said) the Consequences are the same, and full as

calamitous, to my own Family, by such a Stroak, as they would be to another Family, if I should, by a Murther, deprive it of a like Relation. If, therefore, a Man were at full liberty, as to any express Command of God, to do that violence to himself; yet he would be obliged to withhold his Hand, by many other Commands of God, which forbid the doing so much Mischief to other People, as such a Violence does always do. There is therefore nothing gain'd to this Cause, by alledging the sixth Commandment does not forbid Self-Murther, as relating to our Neighbour only, *i.e.* to other People; because 'tis manifest, our Neighbours, other People, are exceedingly mischief'd by the Breach of it in Self-Murther. The Mistake in all these Cases seems to be this, at the Bottom, the thinking the Commands of the *second Table* refer to *one* Neighbour only, namely, the Party concern'd immediately in the Injury; whereas they do undoubtedly refer to all Neighbours that are, by a natural and easy Consequence, concern'd and injur'd: As the Wife in the Husband, the Husband in the Wife, the Parents in the Children, and the Children in the Parents; and so in all Relations, more or les. And therefore, if the Commands of God, prohibiting Adultery, Theft, and False-witness, are understood to prohibit not only the single *Acts*, but also the mischievous and wicked *Consequences* of those *Acts*, which are natural and unavoidable; 'tis plain the *sixth* Commandment does the like, and therefore forbids Self-Murther, unless it can be separated

from all those mischievous and wicked Consequences that unavoidably follow that Practice.

And, that these *Consequences* are equally intended by God the Lawgiver, and are to be as much regarded by Men, as the prime Mischief and *Occasion* of them, may appear farther from hence, (as well as the Guilt of Self-Murther) that though a Man were never so weary of his Life, and sought as willingly for Death, as People in Pain for Ease, and wearied Labourers for Rest and Sleep ; yet were it utterly unlawful to give that Man the Satisfaction he desir'd, by killing him ; not only because it would be murthering of that single Man ( notwithstanding his Desire of dying ) but because of the Mischiefs following to the Family, by such Death. *First*, It would be Murther to kill a Man, though he were very desirous of dying, and requested it, as a Kindness, at your hands : Murther therefore does not barely consist in Violence that is offered to one, *against his Will* ; but, in taking away a Life which you have no Right to take away, by the Laws of God or Man. But why have you no Right to do that which he desires of you, since Wrong is done to no one who is willing ; and he conveys his Right to you, by his desiring you to kill him ? The Reason is, he has no Right himself, and therefore can convey none to another. If he were Master of his own Life, so as to lay it down at pleasure, by God's Law, I do not see but he might make *you* Master of it, if he pleas'd, and by full Consent. Whatever he can lawfully do to himself, he can, if he will, empower you to do

do to him ; and whatever he cannot empower you to do to him, he cannot do himself. Now he cannot empower you to kill him ; and the Reason is, he has not power (I mean by God's Law) to kill himself : For if he had power by God's Law to kill himself, he would not offend against God's Law, by commissioning *you* to do so : Taking it therefore for granted, that to kill a Man, though willing and desirous to be kill'd, would yet be Murther before God, it will follow ; *First*, That a Man has really no such Consent to give, his Life is not in his own power to throw away (for if it might be *given*, it might be *taken*) *Secondly*, That Mischief may be done to one that is willing and consenting to it ; and therefore, that Self-Murther is not the less mischievous and injurious, because a Man consents to it. And, *Thirdly*, that Murther (as well as other Crimes) has especial respect to the Injuries and Mischiefs that other People suffer, as well as to those inflicted immediately on the Party concern'd. For if Murther be a Crime, because it deprives a Man of what is so valuable as Life (although not valued by this Man, who willingly parts with it) it is also a Crime, because it deprives *other* People of the Assistance, Help, and Comfort which that Life either did, or might afford them. And that which another Man's Life is to *his* Relations, Kindred and Dependants, that is *your* Life to *your* Relations, Kindred and Dependants ; and therefore no more to be cast away by *you*, than *his* is to be taken away by any other Man.

I have

I have repeated these things, that you might see the plainer, how a Man's Life is not his own to do as he pleases with it ; but, that could he be supposed to be at liberty, with respect to his single self, to throw it away at pleasure ; yet that his Duty and Obligation to his *Relations* (not now to say the *Publick*) would constrain him not to do it : And this by the Law of God, even by the Sixth Commandment, which, forbidding the Injuries and Mischiefs consequential upon Murther, as well as the Murther itself, must also be understood to include the mischievous Consequences of Self-Murther, as well as any else. And if the Consequences are prohibited, the Cause and Occasion of them also is prohibited.

I alledge, in the next place, that both the *Jews* and *Christians*, few or none excepted, have all along condemn'd this Practice, and thought it was condemn'd by the Sixth Commandment in general, as well as by other Passages in Scripture, by natural and unstrain'd Consequence. Although, to do them right, they never fail'd to affirm, that to do violence to one's own Life, was to act against Reason and Natural Religion, withdrawing our Obedience from our Supreme Commander, notwithstanding his Will, distrusting his Care and Providence, and betraying an impotent and effeminate Mind ; shrinking from beneath the common Accidents of Life, and able to bear nothing uneasy ; together with those other Arguments which are every where to be met withal, and which, therefore, I meddle not with at present ; being content you should only observe, that

this

this Practice hath been all along condemn'd by People of all Religions, and pursued with great Abhorrence, and all manner of Discouragements, and by the Christian Religion especially with dreadful Sentences: And therefore, let every one consider seriously what Obligations the Consent, that is so general, and so reasonable, must lay upon them. To think it is not forbidden by God to destroy the Work of his Hands, because Self-Murther is not named expresly, is to leave yourself at liberty to commit a hundred other hateful Crimes, that are not specified in particular, but are concluded under general Heads. When God says to *Noah* in *Gen. 9. 6. Whoso sheddeth Man's Blood, by Man shall his Blood be shed, for in the Image of God made he Man*: 'Tis plain, that whatever the Meaning of the last Words are, in whatever Sense Man is said to be *made in the Image of God*; the Reason of the Prohibition holds as strong and good against *Self-Murther*, as against the Killing any other Man. For, if I must not shed the Blood of *another* Man, because he is *made in the Image of God*; I must not shed the Blood of *my own self*, because I also am a Man, and made alike also *in the Image of God*, as he is. That Reason, I say, (whatever it is) restrains *Self-Murther* just as much as it does the Murther of any other Man. But I will also add (and which I would you should remember) a Reason, why *Self-Murther* is not, any where, *expressly* prohibited by its Name; and that is, that whatever Sins and Offences God, as a Lawgiver, prohibits, he prohibits with a Penalty; He affixes

such

such a Punishment to such a Crime, and he who commits that Crime, is to undergo the determin'd Punishment in this World, whether it be Restitution, Loss of Limb, or of Life itself. Now this can never happen in the Case of Self-Murther, which prevents all Punishment, and therefore prevents all *Threatning*, and all Laws. When I say, that God prohibits no Offence, without affixing a Punishment to its Transgression; I do not mean, that he always did it *himself*, but that it was always done by his Appointment, Order and Decree; though for the most part the Punishment is nam'd by him himself. But neither God, nor Magistrate, can prohibit Self-Murther with any Penalty that can affect the Criminal himself; because, by his very Crime, he escapes all temporal Punishment in Person; he is dead before you can take any cognizance of his Offence. You see, then, what Reason there is, why Self-Murther was not expressly prohibited, by Name, by God, or *Moses*, by Command of God. No Law can be enacted, to any purpose, without a Penalty; where therefore there can be no Penalty, there can be no Law: Now Self-Murther prevents all Penalty, and therefore wants no particular Prohibition: It must therefore be included under general Commands, and forbidden only as a *Sin*, of which God only can take cognizance, and that in another World. This Satisfaction was owing to that common Objection, that Self-Murther was no where expressly forbidden by God by Name, tho' abundance of Matters of much less moment were, in the Holy Scriptures. But I must say, upon

on this Occasion, that *Scripture-Silence* is true Silence, and says nothing either for, or *against* any Practice: And that when, in this Relation of *Abi-thophel*, as also of that of *Judas*'s sad End, there is neither Blame, nor Commendation bestowed on what was done by either; we must judge by some other Rule, whether they did well or amiss, and not by the Relation; which neither blames by not commanding, nor commends by not blaming what is related. It is most certain, that Self-Murther is forbidden by God in general, and by consequence in many places of the Holy Scriptures: And is really utterly irreconcileable with that Patience under Afflictions, that Resignation and Submission to the Will of God, in all Conditions of Life, however sad and calamitous, that the Christian Religion certainly requires of its Professors. And to think it is no Sin to destroy one's self, is one of the fatallest Mistakes a Man can fall into, and fruitful of all ill Consequences, and utterly condemns all the Wisdom, and all the Religion that ever was esteemed in the World. But I will, at present, only insist on your considering what has been said, concerning the Mischief and the Injury done, by these sudden Stroaks, to our Neighbour, *i. e.* to other People. There is sometimes a great Loss to the Publick, by throwing away a valuable and useful Life: Always Scandal and Offence taken by good, but weak People; and some are misled by such Examples. But who can express the Pain and Grief, the Shame and the Confusion of all the innocent Relations that survive? Even natural and easy Deaths create a world

a world of Sorrows, and make a deal of humane Life (short as it is) tedious, and full of Trouble : Sudden and accidental Deaths affect us yet deeper ; and if they have any thing remarkably calamitous and sad in them, it is worse still. But when 'tis violent and deliberate, then are they perfectly oppres'd and overwhelm'd. Is this the Care Men are to take of those who love them best, and who are, often, best belov'd by them ? Does this look any thing like Piety to Parents, or Kindness to Wife and Children ? Yet this is the Return that these unnatural Children make to Fathers and to Mothers, if alive ; this is the Dowry that these Husbands leave their Wives ; and this the Patrimony Fathers convey to their Descendants. 'Tis true, indeed, these miserable People *intend* not these Misfortunes and Afflictions to their Friends and Kindred ; they have it not in their Hearts to entail such Misery upon those to whom they wish all Happiness : But so it is, they see, in other People's Cases ; and so, they know, it must be in their own : And 'tis no matter what they *purpose*, when what they *do* will have its natural Operation, and occasion all these Mischiefs. I think, if any Consideration that is purely humane, could restrain these cruel Violences, it should, and would be this, of saving so much Pain and Sorrow, and Confusion, as they unavoidably occasion to the best and neareſt Friends they have in the World, by parting in such manner from them. Is it so hard for *you* to bear a little Poverty, a little Shame, Reproach or Infamy, or even the Fear and Apprehenſion of these things ?

things? So hard, that you will rather die than venture them, or than endure them? And yet you will entail them on your Kindred and your Family, who have done nothing to deserve them: You will leave them to the Reproaches and Revilings, and the ill Usage of a pitiless, insulting, and uncharitable World; who will be sure to load them with the Infamy, and the Dishonours that you leave them. But, above all, with what perplexing Doubts and Fears, with what amazing and distracting Thoughts, do you fill their Minds, concerning your Condition in the other World? That Concern, indeed, touches even Strangers; all that hear of such sad Accidents: But that's an easy transient Trouble, in comparison with that which Kindred and Relations feel on such Occasions, whose Grief is equal to their Love, and lasting as is their Life.

Sometimes it happens, that the Consideration of doing Mischief, or Dishonour to those they love, and to whom they owe all Duty, will restrain People from doing what they incline strongly to do; and from doing which, the Consideration of their *own* Honour, Interest, and Duty will not restrain them. And therefore, it were well if these unhappy People, when they forget God and themselves, would yet permit the Sense of the Duty they owe their Neighbour, even their best Friends, and nearest Relations, to dwell upon their Minds, and have its Work upon them; that they would be content to live, at least till they can die without doing Wrong or Mischief to *other People*. This is what the Consideration of *Abithophel's End* led

led me to say, in opposition to a Practice that prevails too much among us, of People's destroying themselves, as he did. When the Jayler (who had receiv'd so strict a Charge of securing *Paul* and *Silas*, and knew that he must answer Body for Body for his Prisoners) *found the Prison-doors open*, *he drew out his Sword, and would have kill'd himself, if Paul had not cried out with a loud Voice, Do thy self no harm, for we are all here, Act. 16. 27.* But this Jayler was a poor *Gentile*, an ignorant and unlearned *Roman*, in all likelihood; and therefore it is no great Wonder, to see him forward to dispatch himself in such a manner; who only had it in his Mind to avoid, perhaps, a lingring and tormenting Death, for letting his Prisoners escape, by one more quick and easy, by his own Hand; and knew, it may be, nothing of any other Life than what he was leaving: By such People one can hardly expect the Laws of Nature, or the Dictates of Reason, or the Opinions of wise Writers, should be considered; they live by Sense, and are govern'd by their Passions. But better things might be expected of *Ahitophel*; a Few, a Man of better Education, a Man of Birth, the King's Counsellor, and accounted so wise, that whoever advis'd with *Ahitophel*, it was, in those Days, *as if he had enquired at the Oracle of God*; and therefore so much feared by *David*, when he heard he was with *Absalom*, that he prayed expressly to God, that he would *defeat the Counsel of Ahithophel*, before he knew what it was; as knowing it would be shrewdly mischievous, if followed. That one thus qualified should dare to die in such a manner,

is still more strange and unaccountable ; yet even *Abithophel's* Self-Murther was not near so wicked and audacious, as such an Attempt must needs be in an Understanding educated *Christian* ; to whom the Will and Commands of God are reveal'd with equal Certainty, but with much greater (at the last much plainer) Arguments and Motives, both to deter from all Offence, and to encourage to Obedience. A *Christian*, that believes in God, the Immortality of the Soul, and the Life of the World to come, so much, that he could not be a *Christian* without such Belief ; nor indeed a wise Man in being a *Christian* ; one that believes, that the Wrath of God is now reveal'd against all Unrighteousness ; that without Repentance no Man's Sins can be forgiven ; that after Death there is no Repentance ; but that as the Tree falls, so it will lie : That such a Man as this, professing the Faith of Christ crucified, and covenanting with God, in Baptism, to take up the Cross, and bear it, if need be, to Death, should, in the Impatience of his Soul, and press'd by some Calamity a little more than ordinary, deliberately choose to throw this Burthen off, by committing what he knows a Sin, of which he knows he never can *repent*, and venture the most dreadful Consequence of that to everlasting Ages, is what no Body could ever reason themselves into the Belief of, if the frequent Practice of some most unhappy People did not convince us, it *might* be done by letting us see it *was* : But 'tis, in truth, a great Reproach to Reason and Christ's Religion, that so it is ; and not a little Dishonour is also cast upon our *Nation* here-

by, as furnishing more Examples of this sort of Violence than any other, tho' much larger: Tho' that Reproach may help a little to save the Honour of Religion, as casting this bad Practice, somewhat, on our Climate, Diet, Liberty, Complexion, and Way of living. But I would make no manner of Excuse for it; 'tis a Practice to be abhor'd and condemn'd with all our Zeal, to be pursued with all Pity; and to be guarded against with all our Care and Prudence, all our Reason and Religion, our walking in the Ways of God with all Stedfastness, and pouring out our constant Prayers for his preventing and assisting Grace, that his Fear may ever be before us, and that no Temptations to such Impiety may ever prevail upon us. Of the rest of the Particulars contain'd in the Text, in the Manner already laid out, you will read in the Discourses following.

**SE**R.

# S E R M O N II.

## II SAMUEL XVII. VERSE 23.

*And when Ahithophel saw that his Counsel was not followed, he saddled his Ass, and arose, and gat him home to his House, to his City, and put his Household in order, and hang'd himself, and died, and was buried in the Sepulchre of his Father.*

**H**aving, already, taken occasion from these Words, to consider the Case of Self-Murther, and shewn that *Ahitophel* had no right to dispose of his own Life, in the manner he did; nor any Man else to offer violence to himself: But that all Men were restrain'd from such Attempts, by the general Law of God, contain'd in the sixth Commandment forbidding Murther; which being grounded on the Reason given by God in Gen. 9. 6. that *Man was made in the Image of God*, did as certainly take in Self-Murther, as the Murther of any other Man, every Man being himself made in the Image of God, as much as his Brother: And shewn moreover, that the Consequences of Murther, Adultery, Theft, and False-witness, being as certainly forbidden by God, as the prime Acts themselves, it would unavoidably follow, that the Consequences of Self-Murher were as certainly forbidden, as the Consequences of any other Murther: And therefore that the sixth Commandment, though especially relating to the Duty we owe

our Neighbour (*i. e.* to one another) did as certainly prohibit Self-Murther, by prohibiting its Consequences, as any other Command prohibited the prime Act, by prohibiting the mischievous Effects that follow from it unavoidably; and answered, as the Time would let me, the common Objections that are rais'd, in justification of these sorts of Violence: I am now, without farther Repetition, to proceed to the Second thing I was to speak to, namely, the Occasion of *Abithophel's* Self-Murther; which was, *that he saw that his Counsel was not followed*. The History of that matter is, in short, this: *Absalom*, by his popular Demeanour and artful Management, had estrang'd the Hearts of the Jews from the Love and Obedience they owed to *David* his Father; and there was so great a Defection, that it is, really, unaccountable, from what appears in the History: In this, *Abithophel* was deeply concern'd, and was accounted the very Life and Strength of the Conspiracy: And being call'd to give his Advice what *Absalom* had to do, he took care, in the first place, to make the Breach irreconcileable betwixt the Father and the Son. In this thing *Absalom* followed his Directions closely, as you may see, in 2 Sam. 16. 20. But advising farther, Chap. 17. to pursue *David* closely, with a Body of Men that might certainly surprize him, he was, in this Point, oppos'd by *Hushai* the *Archite*, another very able Counsellor, and sent by *David*, on purpose, to go over to *Absalom's* Party, to defeat the Counsel of *Abithophel*; and he did it effectually: For his Counsel was the more plausible

ble (though not so good for the young Prince) and was accordingly followed, both *Absalom* and all the Men of *Israel* saying, *The Counsel of Hushai the Archite, is better than the Counsel of Achitophel*. I leave you to read yourselves the different Counsels of these two Statesmen; 'tis only to my purpose to observe, that the Distast *Achitophel* took at his Advices being rejected, was the occasion of his Ruine; *When he saw his Counsel was not followed, he arose, and went home to his House, set his Household in order, and hang'd himself, and died*. There were two Things especially, that gave him this Discontent; the First, to see his Counsel not followed, but that of another Man preferr'd before his; a Disgrace that a great Statesman knows not how to bear, or put up: His Counsel was (you will find in his History) had in so great Account, that to advise with *Achitophel*, was, in those Days, *as if one had enquir'd of the Oracles of God*: And this Esteem makes a Disgrace sit so much heavier on the Mind. But, Secondly, he saw the Consequences of his Counsel being rejected; he saw his new Choice, and the Party he had turn'd to, would be ruin'd, by the Advice of *Hushai the Archite*: He knew that *Absalom* would not be able to hold it long against his Father; he had lost his Opportunity, and given to *David* Time and Breath, which was the only thing he wanted; and leisure to the People of *Israel* to consider their Revolt, and to repent, and timely to make their Peace with their old King, by returning to their Duty and Obedience: This was the fatal Miscarriage of *Absalom's*

lom's Affairs, that *Ahitophel* saw clearly, and saw it was not to be retriev'd, and saw, perhaps, the Treachery of *Hushai*, and his Design in giving such Advice. And he knew very well where *David's* Wrath would light, with all his Vengeance, when he should be resettled on his Throne again, namely, upon the *Evil Counsellors*, of which he was himself the Chief. He saw, the Heart of a good old indulgent Father, would (if he scap'd with Life in fight) quickly pass by, and spare the Rashness of a young and giddy Prince, his beloved Son; and discharge his Fury on the wicked Instruments that had seduced him to Rebellion: And you may see by the Tenderness and Care that *David* took of *Absalom*, in his Charge to *Joab*, before the Battle, and the Grief he felt upon his Loss; you may see by this, how rightly and truly *Ahitophel* judg'd of Matters, and how well he knew where the Storm at last would fall, even chiefly on himself, who had given such mischievous Counsel, that had it been pursued, *David* had certainly been lost. For this, he knew, he must pay down his Life, when *David* should return with Victory; there was no Pardon for one so able, and deep engag'd in the Conspiracy as he: And therefore he resolves to prevent the Stroke of *David*, by one of his own. So that here is the Sense of a Disgrace past, in having his Counsel rejected, and the Fear of farther Shame and Pain to come (the Consequence (he saw) of his Counsel's not being followed) that occasion'd him to fall into this desperate Resolution, of laying violent Hands upon himself.

When

When Men engage in any wicked Practice, as *Abithophel* here did, and find themselves disappointed, and their great Purposes defeated, and they are brought to Shame, or into Danger, their Minds are not equal to their Burthen ; their Stomach is so high, their Pride so great, that they know not what to do with that single Imagination, of *what the World will think or say of them*. All Men, they fancy, are Observers of their Actions, and have their Eyes upon them ; and when they have miscarried, all Men censure, and reproach them, and condemn them. So that tho' they can bear the *Guilt* themselves, yet they cannot bear the *Shame* it occasions them with others ; this oppresses and confounds them. I think one may observe, that in, almost, all these deadly Resolutions that People take against themselves, there is something *worldly* at the Bottom, that meets with some naughty Passion or other, that prevails against their Reason, and sets them on this bad Work. And what can one infer better, from this Example, than that every one should be extreamly careful, how they engage themselves in Matters of great Difficulty, or Danger, lest the Disappointment be too great for them : And that not only in Matters certainly wicked and forbidden, but even in all others, where the Event, if not successful, is like to be of great, but ill Consequence to them ; for few People understand themselves throughly, or know the Strength or Weakness of their Minds, in great Trials ; and therefore should not easily put themselves upon them.

But since the Accidents of Life, that are neither to be foreseen, nor prevented, trouble us as much as the Miscarriages of our own Designs deliberately laid; the next useful Caution may be, to have our Minds so prepar'd, and our Affections so subdued, and kept in so good order, that the common Calamities of Life, though they may surprize, yet may not quite confound us: That we may not be so lost and destitute of Succour from our Reason, as to give our selves up to the Guidance of our present Passion, and follow where that leads: For this, indeed, is the common Lot of those who fall into the desperate Resolutions we are speaking of: Their Passions are always high, never controul'd or check'd, evermore indulg'd and yielded to; so that when grievous Accidents befall them, they know not whereabouts they are, nor whither to turn themselves: They can bear no Loss or Disappointment, nor fall from the Condition, in which they formerly were, but abandon theniselves entirely to Sorrow, and Despair. The Bottom of this Mischief is, that they place their whole Happiness in the Attainments of this World, in the possessing Riches, the enjoying Honours, and in the Praile and Approbation of Men: And therefore when the first make to themselves Wings and fly away; the Hearts of these People fail with them, when they fall from their Honours, and lose their Dignities; they know not how to breath in any other Air, nor how to want the Courtship and Respects that were wont to be paid their *Power* and *Interest*, not their *Persons*, When they

they lose their Credit and Esteem, and sink in their Reputation, whether deservedly or no, they are dejected to the lowest ebb; they are afraid that every Eye, that looks upon them, views them with Contempt, and that every Tongue is evermore reproaching them, which makes them ashame of Light, and weary of living.

Riches, indeed, are of great use to the making Life easy; but the Happiness of Man's Life does not depend upon abundance of Wealth: Some are happy in a little, and all may be happier in less than they imagine: But, not to philosophise too much upon this Head, get what you can with Innocence and Honesty, with Virtue, and the Fear of God; and keep what you can with Justice to your Neighbour, and Charity to the Poor. That Poverty which I have now in my Eye, and which is sometimes the dreadful Occasion of the mischievous Designs I am speaking against; that Poverty is not, usually, the Want of Riches, which we never could obtain, but which we once were Masters of, and have lost, either by Accident, or viciously mispent. 'Tis the Remembrance of our former Affluence, that makes our present Want so hard and insupportable, even when we are undone by unforeseen Calamities, and had no faulty Hand in bringing ourselves into these Streights. Yet such a Poverty as this, tho' attended with all Men's Pity, and no Reproach or Blame, is sometimes so laid to Heart, that the Man will not endure to live under it; than which there can be no Resolution more weak and unreasonable, tho' it were not sinful. Can one think  
the

the Life of Man should lie so much at the Mer-  
cy of every Accident, that may deprive one of  
one's temporal Estate? The Misery should seem  
much greater where our own Vice has brought  
this Poverty upon us, and our Ill-husbandry re-  
duced us to Extremity; for there we reflect upon  
our own Folly, and find it was we ourselves that  
did ourselves this Mischief; and as we bear the  
*Smart*, so we bear the *Blame* alone: When the  
Providence of God afflicts us, we submit to that;  
when the Malice of Man afflicts us, we lay the  
Fault there; and think of doing ourselves Right,  
too often, by severe Revenges. And when we  
afflict ourselves, we can no more help condemn-  
ing ourselves, than others; and sometimes take,  
we see, as severe Revenges on ourselves, as we  
would on others. We must therefore take as  
much Care not to bring ourselves to these Extre-  
mities by our ill Management, and vicious Cour-  
ses; as we must not to provoke others to do us  
as great Mischiefs; because the Suffering is gene-  
rally the same, and the Consequence, sometimes,  
much worse, and the End is Self-destruction. The  
Reproaches Men's own Hearts make them, when  
they have ruin'd themselves and their Families by  
Folly and wicked Courses, are often so sharp and  
painful, that, with all the Spirit and Courage they  
can get, they cannot bear up under them: And  
this is an Effect so sure and constant, that when it  
does not end in such deadly Violences, yet it ends  
in all manner of sottish, loose, and wicked Cour-  
ses: And therefore Care, Sobriety, and frugal  
Courses are the best, if not the only Preserva-  
tives,

tives, against that furious Outrage, or that violent Grief, that the Sense of such a faulty Poverty throws Men oft into. A little Wisdom, moderate Resolutions, and Strength of Mind, will keep a Man right at first, and hold him in the Ways of Goodness and Virtue; when a great deal of every one will be necessary to recal him, when he once has wandered. You do not know what a Change of Mind, a Change of Fortune, so much to the worse, will work in you, nor how you will be able to struggle with such Difficulties. Take care therefore, in time, to avoid the dangerous Experiment: The Reflections on your wicked Extravagancies will not make such Impressions, it may be, on your Mind, whilst you are able to feed, and continue them on, as they will, when all is gone; and you have nothing to divert you, but are left to be consum'd, and eaten up (as it were) by them.

One is almost ashame'd to warn People of falling into Poverty, occasion'd by their Vice, for fear of Self-Murther; but that such Poverty is, now and then, the Occasion of such Violence, and the Fear of Want, the Parent of such desperate Resolutions. 'Tis easy to see what must be said on these Occasions, when People have brought themselves to a Morsel of Bread; namely, that 'tis an ill Way of repairing their past Folly and Wickedness by one to come, that will exceed them all, as much as Heaven is higher than the Earth: That the Misery they endure will end in Death at least, and it may be it will come quickly; and that the Sins that brought them to that Misery,

Misery, will be forgiven upon Repentance, be they never so great and many: Whereas the Course they pitch upon to relieve themselves, is a Sin that admits of no Repentance, and consigns them to Pains and Sorrows that will have no End. These are Arguments that cannot possibly be answered; but for fear they should come too late, when Men are deaf to Reason, and the Mind is obstinately bent upon its wicked Purpose (as deep Woes do strangely fix the Resolution) it were much better that they should prevent their coming into such Necessities, as lay them open to these Temptations, by living in Sobriety, Temperance, and such Good-husbandry, as well befits their Estate and Condition.

Pre-eminence, moreover, Dignities, and Offices of Honours, are not only useful, but absolutely necessary to the good Government of the World; and, without them, there would be no Peace, no Order, no Society, or Civil Commerce among Men; and therefore they are, all of them, the Matter of a very lawful, laudable Ambition: And he who desireth an Office and Employ of Honour, provided he intend to discharge it well, and to do the Good that Office requires, does nothing but what he may honestly do, altho' he also have his eye upon the Recompence that goes along with it, and, without it, would not undertake it. But then Men shew the Weakness of their Minds, when they have tied themselves so close and fast to these Employes and Honours, that when they come to part with them, it is as if their very Hearts were rent asunder; and they are full of

deep

deep Resentment, or a Sadness that is never to be remov'd, and oft precipitates their Death, and sometimes too by Violence. And though it does not often happen, that Men, who fall from their Honours and great Employes, do these cruel Violences to themselves, yet it sometimes does: And I am speaking now to a Practice that, God be thanked, never can be common; but yet which happens much too often, even as often as it happens.

And to make this Head more useful, 'tis certain that People of lesser Fortune and Figure are as much transported with Rage and Resentment, and take as mischievous Resolutions at their little Disappointments and low Falls, in their low Stations, as the greatest do at theirs, that make more Noise by falling higher: And therefore have equal need of taking care, that the Love of Superiority, and Preference, and Distinction, take not such fast rooting in their Minds; but that if the Time of yielding come, they may do it without Impatience, Rage, and deep Resentment.

Credit, Esteem and Reputation, are also, *in the last Place*, so useful to the Well-being of Men, that all imaginable Care is to be taken to gain them, and secure them. There is not that Man in the World, but would be in the good Opinion of all he knows, and all that know him; nothing is easier to the Mind, nothing more useful to him, in all his Affairs, than that all Men should think well of him. Even the Conscience of our Innocence, and the full Certainty we have that we

have

have not deserv'd an ill Reputation with this or that Man, cannot so fortify our Minds, but some Concern will arise in us, when we think thereon; and we had rather much stand right in their Opinion, though we have nothing to fear from them, nor any thing to hope for at their hands. We are made so to depend upon one another, on purpose that we may do each other all good Offices: And the Bottom and Spring of all good Deeds being the good Opinion of their Deserts to whom they are done, 'tis necessary we should think well of other People; and as necessary to be well thought of by them, in order to receive their Favour. Upon these Accounts it is, that we see all Men so extreamly careful to preserve and defend their Reputation and good Name: And therefore 'tis no Wonder, if the Loss, or Danger of it, affect Men very much, and sensibly afflict them: A Man, without it, think he lives amongst a Band of Enemies, who are only restrain'd by Fear, from doing him all manner of Mischief; or, if not this, yet that he is the Subject of their daily Scorn, which is falling lower, than if he were the Subject of their Anger or Revenge, because he would be thereby reckon'd more considerable.

'Tis hard, that that which is so useful and delightful to every Man, should be lost so very easily; but so it must needs be with a Thing that is not in our own keeping, but in every Body's else, to give or take away, as Interest or Humour pleases. But though this be true in the general, that our Reputation depends upon other People;

yet

yet (to do the World Justice) a Man's Reputation with his Friends and Acquaintance, and such as know him pretty well, is very much in his own hands, and will depend, in the main, upon his Virtue and Discretion ; the *first* of which is his inward Guide, and directing Principle ; the *latter*, to govern his exteriour Carriage and Behaviour. And therefore, an honest and prudent Man will keep up his Reputation with those who know him : His Honesty will make his Actions good and honest, and his Prudence will provide they shall be done in the best manner. And when both Inside and the Appearance are right, a Man will hardly be in danger of losing his Reputation with those he values most, and would be best esteemed by ; altho' he may with such as know him not, and take up every thing on trust. But, indeed, the Infamy, Disgrace, and Shame that drive Men to those wicked Practices (we are now especially intending to divert Men from) are generally grounded, not on Malice or Mistake, (tho' much of both is seen in all great Accusations) but upon Facts that are truly infamous and wicked : Men have done something that is either exceedingly unworthy of themselves, or mischievous to others, which excites both Amazement and Abhorrence in those who hear of it, and raises so loud a cry against the Actors ; that, striking, first upon the Imagination strongly, is never after out of their Ear ; they think they hear of nothing but their Infamy, and that all Mouths are full of their Reproaches, and that every Look and Gesture speaks Contempt and Indignation at them : And fancy-

ing themselves to be thus unacceptable to all abroad, and feeling themselves guilty at home, there arises in their Minds such a Mixture of Grief and Shame, Vexation, Fear, Remorse, and other different Passions, that they are almost strangled with the rising of their own Thoughts: And, to deliver themselves from that insupportable Oppression, run headlong into Death, by the first way their poor disordered Fancy prompts them to. The only way therefore to avoid these dreadful Mischiefs, is, to contintie in the ways of Reason and Virtue, to be guilty of no Extravagancies, nor any such Practices, as draw the Hatred or Contempt of the World after them. And it is easier far to preserve our selves from these notorious Crimes, and Follies, than, when they are committed, to guard our Minds against the wicked Suggestions they may offer. A Man in Innocence has a mighty Command over himself, above what he has, when Guilt, and Shame, and Fear have taken a full Possession of him, bewilder'd his Thoughts, dissipated all his Recollection, and enfeebled his Judgment.

I am still for preventing Mischief, rather than remedying it, because 'tis both more easy, and more safe. And although there is no Reason, but is strong enough to disparage and baffle all that can be said in the behalf of these violent Attempts against our selves, when we are safe, and well, and free from any such Fears, and in no danger of these Temptations: Yet when Men come into those perillous Hours, and fall into those Straits and Trials, they are generally deaf to all Reason.

Reason and Argument, and listen only to the Suggestions of their present Passions; they do not answer, but they do not hearken, to what is said: So that if they be not prepar'd before-hand to withstand such Assaults, they seldom do it, when the Danger comes. *Abithophel* could much more easily have avoided practising against his King, and entring a Confederate with rebellious *Absalom*, than, being once enter'd, could avoid giving the most pernicious Counsel to make the Breach between the Father and the Son irreconcileable, and, to cut the War short, by the Surprize of *David*, to secure himself and Party: He could more easily have stay'd at home, and been concern'd with neither Party; than, being once engag'd, to bear another's Counsel being preferr'd to his, and see himself neglected: He could more easily have followed *David*, and shar'd with him in the worst Fortune that could befall him (even though it had been to die with him) than, having made him his Enemy, to think of falling into his Hands, and dying the Death of Traytors. Here were a great many things for him to choose, more safe and honourable than what he chose: And it was much more easy for him to choose any of them, than, having chosen amiss, and involv'd himself in great Dangers, to bear up, like a Man, under them, and not to be overcome with Shame and Fear, and take such desperate Resolutions, as he did. By all which, I mean to say, that Men have it much more in their Power to keep themselves Innocent, and out of Difficulties and great Straits; than, being once guilty and in-  
volv'd,

volv'd, to deliver themselves (not from their Dangers, but) from the distracted Counsels, and Suggestions, their Minds in such Confusion offer them; although they be such, as they themselves, when safe and sober minded, would have startled at and abhorred. They think it a point of Wisdom, in their Straits, to embrace such Counsel, as would have been accounted mad, and senseless, in Prosperity. One Argument, therefore, to perswade Men to preserve themselves innocent and upright, and not to engage in Things hazardous and difficult, for fear the Disappointment should be too much for them; and their distracted Mind should put them upon mischievous and wicked Resolves: One such Argument, I say, is better, and like to prevail more than twenty very fair and reasonable one's, when the Judgment is perverted, and the Understanding almost lost, and the Man is overwhelmed with Misery, neither inclin'd to *ask*, nor capable of *taking* Counsel, when 'tis offer'd him.

And thus, in Cases, where Religious Melancholy is the prevailing Humour, and drives poor People to these sad Extremities; how much easier and safer is it, to secure them at first from taking in such Principles as occasion these disquiet and perplexing Thoughts; than, having taken them in, to secure them against the Power and Influence of those Thoughts? Can any thing be more reasonable to believe, than that God is the very best of Beings? That he transcends all other Beings, as much in Goodness, as in Power and Wisdom? That that Notion is formed as soon

soon in our Minds, and enters as much into the Composition of the Deity, as any other? That a Being thus absolutely, and thus necessarily good, can never intend any thing unmerciful or cruel; that it would be cruel and unmerciful for him, to make a Creature, with design of making it unspeakably miserable; that therefore this neither *is*, nor *can be* done by him; that therefore no Man ever was design'd by God, originally and primarily, to be miserable in the World to come; but only made capable of being so, by sinning voluntarily and deliberately; and, upon that Supposition, of being punish'd, and consequently miserable. But this will shew Men faulty, and God just, in punishing Offenders: That, whereas they think they ground this hard Opinion of God upon the revealed Will in Scripture; they might consider, that if any such thing appear'd *literally*, yet that *that* could hardly be the Sense of the place, which would destroy our natural Notions of the Godhead (as this Pre-ordination to eternal Misery would destroy the natural Notions we have of God's Justice and Goodness:) And next to that, might remember, that when Man fell into Sin, and must have perish'd in it, God was so transcendently merciful, as presently to promise, and in his own due time effected, the sending his only Son into the World, *that the World through him might be saved*: That this his Son did actually come into the World, and live for our Example and Instruction, and die for our Redemption, and made Satisfaction to God for all the Sins of the World; and, for the Merit of these Sufferings, was ad-

vanc'd to God's right Hand in Heaven, and made the Head of the Church; who, before his going up to Heaven, commission'd his Apostles to preach to all the World, and teach them, that if they repented of their Sins, would believe in Jesus Christ, and be baptiz'd in Matter and Form, as he requir'd, and live in Obedience to God's Word, they should certainly be forgiven, and sav'd. That these Invitations and Calls to Faith, to Repentance, and Baptism, and to Rewards upon Conditions, were all of them inconsistent with, and contradictory to all manner of Predestination to Wickedness and Punishment: And that the whole design of the Gospel is overturn'd by such a Scheme of Cruelty, and horrible Injustice; and that such Notions do utterly root out the Love of God from all Men's Hearts, and represent him worse, than one can do his Adversary; in as much as Revenge is somewhat better, than deliberate, unprovok'd, and undeserv'd Cruelty. 'Tis easier, I say, to perswade People, that God neither has, nor can predestinate any one to Misery; than, when they are once perswaded of such Doctrine, to divert them from the Consequences of it, that naturally *may*, tho' they *do not* always follow, either Carelessness under the Security of their Predestination to Life, or Despair under the Certainty of being lost for ever. I cannot tell how Men come to be perswaded to believe such hard things of God, who is Goodness it self, as they never did or could believe of any Man living, though very bad, and their greatest Enemy: But 'tis easy to see, that when they *do* believe,

believe these things, they are capable of no Advice or Comfort, if once they apply them to themselves, and take the dark side.

Tell a Man, who labours under the Sense of much and frequently repeated Sin, and is ready to die under God's Displeasure, and is seeking out forbidden Means; tell him, that the Mercies of God, in *Jesus Christ*, are infinite; and that though his Sins be never so heinous, both for weight and number, yet they will all be pardon'd on Repentance and Amendment, and his Soul be purified by the precious Blood of Christ; and he may turn his Heart to God, repent him of his Sins, and fall from his cruel Resolutions, and become a new Man. But, bid him throw away that Instrument of Death, he has so carefully provided, when he believes he lies under the Sentence of God's Wrath, and seal'd to Death by a Decree that is not to be revers'd; and you do but talk to the Waves of the Sea, or the Winds, that hear as little. I know no Argument that can wrest away the Sword, that such a Perswasion puts into a Man's Hand. And, that such hard Opinions have no worse nor frequenter ill Consequences, is owing all to the Grace and Goodness of God. They are fitted to do more Mischief; but God is still the Governour of all, and loves us better than we do ourselves, or think he does, and prevents us from doing ourselves Mischief, by our reasoning falsely against him, because he sees us ignorant, and not malicious.

The Occasion *Abithophel* took of destroying himself, led me to consider the Occasions that

other People take to follow him in that bad Practice. And we may see, I think, in every one of them, (and as many others, as any one can reckon up) that some unlawful Passion or other is at the Bottom, that, meeting with some heavy Disappointment, gives this naughty Counsel. Pride, that disdains to be controul'd; Self-conceit, that will endure no Preference, scarce Equality; the Love of unlawful Pleasures, that effeminate the Mind, and makes it unable to bear any Hardship or Calamity; such Love of Riches as makes Men fraudulent, or violent Oppressors, and puts them on shameful and unjust Courses, which, being detected, give them unspeakable Confusion both of Face and Heart; such Ambition of Honours as puts Men on unlawful Courses to obtain them, or preserve them, and which they wear with Insolence, and use to the Hurt, and not the Defence of their Inferiours; so that they beget Envy and Malignity in People's Minds, and make them wish for their Fall, and rejoice when it comes: The Sense of which makes these haughty Minds, when fallen, the most abject, pitiful, and poor spirited things that can be; well knowing that they, who have made no Friends in the time of their Authority, will find none when they come to lose it; but be treated with the Scorn, and ill Usage they govern'd others with; For no Man who hath gain'd his Honours honestly, and us'd them moderately, and well, but will find Respect and Safety when he lays them down; And Shame, and Infamy, and Danger belong only to shameful, infamous, and injurious Practices: They who have done no Evil, will

will be afraid of none. Do but live in the Credit and Esteem, that virtuous honest Practices will give, and you will never fly to Death to deliver you from Disgrace and Infamy, from Men's Reproaches, and despiteful Usage.

I do not, however, affirm, that in all Resolutions of the bad kind we are speaking to, some vicious Passion *is* at the bottom: But, in general, it is, I believe, so: They may proceed, also, from great Weakness of Mind, false Principles, and from Mistakes in Religion; which though they are not Sins, yet produce most sad Effects, and are only to be prevented by thinking as well of God, as they do of any good Man they know. Nor have I taken any pains to shew, how little any of these Causes, or Occasions can justify or excuse the sad Effects of them; for having shewed you, I hope, before, that this Practice was forbidden of God, and consequently sinful, I had no need to prove, that nothing can excuse a downright Sin; but rather warn you, to avoid those dangerous Paths that have, we think, led others to Destruction: For, he who does not look to the Temptation and the Snare, shall, in vain, resolve against the Sin and Danger to which they lead.

**S E R M O N III.****II SAMUEL XVII. VERSE 23.**

*And when Ahithophel saw that his Counsel was not followed, he fadled his Ass, and arose, and gat him home to his House, to his City, and put his Household in order, and hang'd himself, and died, and was buried in the Sepulchre of his Father,*

**H**aving already (in considering these Words) spoken, in the First place, to the disastrous End Ahithophel came to, namely, that he hang'd himself and died ; and shewed how unlawful an Act that was in him, and would be so in any one besides : And, in the Second, to the Occasion of it, namely, because he saw his Counsel was not followed ; and shewn from thence, that it is evermore some naughty Passion at the Bottom, meeting some Disappointment, that irritates the Mind to such unreasonable and desperate Resolutions, of which we ought to take great care : I am now to go on, and consider, Thirdly, that which was previous to this Fact ; *He arose, gat him home to his House, to his City, and put his Household in order :* And, Lastly, what followed, *he was buried with his Fathers.*

In the Third place then, *He arose, gat him home to his House, to his City, and put his Household in order.* He could not long endure that Place and Company, where the Scene of his Disgrace lay (as he thought) especially : And yet, if he had reasoned

reasoned right, he had found, that the longer he had tarried there, the more he had been respected; the more destructive and unreasonable his Rival's Advice had appear'd; and every Hour had discovered how wile and necessary *his own* was, at that Juncture: And he had seen *Hushai* either slighted as a weak Counsellor, or suspected as a treacherous one, and himself again the Oracle. But to be *Second* is, it seems, with Statesmen, to be no Body; his Rage and Ambition would not let him consider, nor wait for an Event that would justify his Wisdom and Foresight to *Absalom*, and all the hasty Council of War. But this was not all; his wise Counsel was not only defeated, but that Defeat, he saw, would prove the utter Ruin of *Absalom*, and all his Party: So that *Abithopbel's* Fear would no more permit him to stay in the Camp *secure*, than his Ambition would let him sit in the Council-Chamber *contented*. Upon these Principles, *He arose, gat him home to his own House, and sat his Household in order.* In which Words, there is nothing observable, but that he acted very *deliberately*: Had he been warn'd of God, that he should shortly die, as King *Hezekiah* was, he could have done no more, nor otherwise than he here did; *He would have risen, and hasted home, and have set his House in order.*

Here is *one* Man in the World, at least, that seems to have destroyed himself with Deliberation, and without any visible Marks of Distraction. This Thing, we know, seldom or never happens in our own Country: *Here, every one is downright mad, that makes away himself by any manner*

manner of means; he could not, else, act so against the Principles of Self-preservation, the Laws of Nature, Revelation, his own Interest and Honour. These are the Arguments, our Pity, rather than our Reason makes upon these sad Occasions; and Pity rather to the *Living* than the *Dead*. And should the Laws of the Land take no Cognizance of these Violences, should such a Death have no Consequence with respect to the temporal Estate of the surviving Relations; ten People, I believe, to one, now, would be found to be Self-Murtherers; and the publick Judgment would (were there to be one made) be much the same with that of private People.

Is it not manifest, in all Cases besides this one, that People can and do deliberately do themselves the greatest Mischiefs, without any manner of Suspicion of having lost their Reason and Senses, as those Words are, in this Case, understood to signify? Do not Men daily venture to provoke God's Vengeance, by the most daring Impieties, with as much Understanding and Sobriety, as they shew in any other faultless Action of their Lives? Do they not venture Liberty and Life by a thousand Villanies, which they commit against each other, every Day, by a Malice most propense and serious, and with most studied Artifice, although they know that, if discovered, they shall surely pay down their Heads for what they do? Do not Men, by Riots and Excess of every kind, hazard their Health and Life almost every Day they live, altho' they see the Mischief that will follow unavoidably, not at distance, but in view before them?

Is Man so wise and so considerate a Creature, that he will not knowingly, and resolutely defy the Justice of God and Man, and all the Effects of Vice and Wickedness, and most audaciously hazard Soul and Body, Health and Reputation, both in this World, and that to come? And do we say these People are *distracted*, and excuse them by loss of Reason and Understanding? I am not saying hereby, that Self-Murtherers are no more mad than all these other desperately wicked People are: But I say, that to conclude a Self-Murtherer is therefore mad, because he acts so like a Madman, against Nature, Reason, Religion, and Self-preservation, is not a right Way of concluding; because, by the same Rule, all the enormously wicked ones of the World might be judg'd mad, with as much Reason as the others, since, doubtlessly, they act as much against all Principles of Reason, and Self-security, as they. And yet the World does not conclude these wicked People mad; they think it is not quite so well with them; their Reason, Sense, and Understanding make them accountable to God and Man, and will most certainly condemn them.

The People, who truly want their Sense and Understanding, do indeed often fall into Mischief, and often do great Violence to themselves; but, generally speaking, they seek not Mischief as their *End*, but fall into it accidentally, as blind Men do into a Pit: They do not make it their Design, nor pitch upon the Means that are most sure and proper to effect such Purpose; one may commonly see some notable Failure in their Projects:

But

But in these sorts of Violence there is a fixt Design, an End most stedfastly pursued ; and Means most suitable and proper pitch'd upon, and renewed with a most obstinate Resolution and Firmness, again and again, upon a Disappointment ; there is hardly any Action of their Life carried on with more Contrivance, than that which is to put an End to it : And if the Design were right, they would be counted rather *cunning* Men, than *mad* or *senseless* ; so that 'tis plain these People make their Judgment from the Event only, which is doubtless very wrong : For though the End be never so naught, unreasonable and wicked ; yet a Man is not therefore mad when he chooses it, but naught, unreasonable, and wicked. A Man, indeed, is in some sense mad, when he is under the Dominion of any of his Passions, and out of the Government of Reason : But because a Man's Reason is given him by God, to govern himself withal, and to keep his Passions in good order ; therefore Men do not excuse the mischievous Effects of any of these Passions, by saying *the Man was mad*. And when one Man kills another with equal Deliberation, with as much Preparation and Contrivance, as some Men shew in dispatching themselves ; he is not commonly acquitted by making it *Man-slaughter*, but found guilty of *Murther* : And there can be no reason for this, but that in Self-Murther no Body else receives Damage, for whom the Jury might be concern'd ; which shews they rather consider the Mischief that is done, than the State and Disposition of Mind with which it is done.

Neither

Neither do I, by this, intend to say, that they who commit these Violences on themselves, are not depriv'd of their Sense and Reason; but that it is not *always* so: It were indeed to be wish'd much rather, that all Self-Murtherers were truly distracted, than that any should be so with Reason and Sense entire and sound. But all the World sees the contrary; there's many of them go about this Business as regularly, leisurely, and deliberately, as *Ahitophel* here did, *They rise, get them to their own home, and set their Household in order,* just as he did; they resolve on it a good while, before they pursue it steadily; they sometimes justify this Practice, and defend it by Principles; so that, upon some pressing Calamity, one may expect such an Issue from them before it actually comes to pass: And yet, when it comes to pass, 'tis all one; it is as if they had been suddenly seiz'd with Frenzy, and they had been distracted but an Hour before: The *Jury* and the *Coroners* see nothing but the sad Event, and, in Commiseration to the surviving Relations, if any thing be to be sav'd to them, declare them distracted; and, *no Man but a mad Man would destroy himself,* is all that is said to justify such a Sentence. Which is what is by no means true, and what they know the contrary to, in almost every single Case but this. And in this they are, as I said, only misguided by their Pity; they spare the Dead, to do some Kindnes to the Living; and since no Body else but the Relations suffer by such a Violence, they shall suffer no more than they needs must, by the natural Consequences of such a Loss.

Too much Pity cannot, indeed, be shewn to those who are made so miserable by these violent Deaths: But who can tell but that less Pity would be needful, if less Pity were shewn, on such Occasions? The strictest Discipline, in Camps, is attended with fewer Executions than if it were more remiss: And a severe exacting Justice, in Execution of the Laws, prevents abundance of Offences in the Civil State. And there are fewer Duels in *France* than *England*, altho' the Country is, without compare, much larger, and the Humours of that People much more volatile, and easy to be mov'd than ours: And this, for a Reason very obvious, and reproachful to us, *namely*, that few or none are ever pardon'd; but Justice is *there* as blind and relentless, as the Rage of Men, that makes work for her, is *here*. Who can tell, but a severer Sentence past upon Self-Murtherers, would make fewer of them? And the utter Ruin of some few Fatherless and Widows, prevent a great many more from being Fatherless and Widows? The Laws of almost all wise Nations, have had that in their Eye, in enacting Penalties: They have punish'd Wife and Children, and undone whole Families, for the Offence of a single Person, the Head of them, not for want of knowing how innocent they were, but with Intention of restraining those Heads within the Bounds of Duty, for fear of hazarding and hurting those who were so innocent, and whom they lov'd, and were oblig'd to love, and to secure from Want, and Shame, and Misery, and make as happy as they could: Following herein the Example of God himself, *Who will visit,*

visit, he says, *the Children to the third and fourth Generation of them who hate him*; i. e. who keep not that Commandment of abhorring Idols, with no other purpose, than to keep the Fathers faithful to his Service.

It were therefore to be wish'd, that an Experiment of this kind were now and then made, to see if it might not be more useful to the preventing these Misfortunes, than the merciful Courses that are now generally taken, to bring in all *Distraeted*, and so absolve them all from any legal Suffering, and punishing neither the Dead with Infamy, nor the Living with any Loss of Estate or Goods.

The Consideration of disgracing and undoing Wife, and Children, and Family, is intended, we see, by the Laws, to restrain the Fathers of Houses from offending, who would be more at liberty, if they themselves were only concern'd, and were not to involve those near Relations in Ruin: Why should not this have its Influence also, to prevent some Self-Murthers, if the utter undoing of Wife and Children (as far as Loss of all temporal Estate will do it) were sure to follow such a Violence? The Laws intend it should; and 'tis reasonable to hope some good Effects would follow, if such Laws were duly executed. And can any one tell, whether they, who will always shew *Mercy*, when *Justice* is due, do not encourage those Misfortunes by their Pity, and make Men easier to destroy themselves, because they see it will have no worse Consequence to their Relations, than if they died a natural Death? These things are surely of some

some Consideration. And if some Examples were wisely made, they might deter a great many rash and wicked Enterprizes of this Nature.

And so might also the Consideration of what I am about to say, under the *fourth and last Head*, concerning what followed this wicked Fact of *Abi-thophel*; and that is, that *he was buried in the Sepulchre of his Father*. *Josephus* says indeed, (Dc. B. J. l. 3. c. 14.) that if any amongst the *Jews* kill themselves, it is decreed, that till the Sun go down, they shall be unburied. This does not appear any where in the *Law of Moses*; and the Example of *Abi-thophel*, in the Text, is against it; for he, we see, *was buried*, and that *in the Sepulchre of his Father*: So that this Decree was made in After-times, by Civil Authority, and it reached no farther than not burying by *Day-light*; as if Self-Murther were to be accounted a Deed of Darkness, and treated accordingly.

Among the *Greeks*, *Aristotle* says, it was generally receiv'd, that the dead Bodies of Self-Murtherers should be disgraced some way or other; and they could find no other way to do it, than by denying them Burial. So when an unaccountable Frenzy had seized the *Milesian Maids*, and they hang'd themselves in great numbers, the Magistrates knew not how to repress, and put a stop to this growing mad Humour, but by ordering them to be carried out to Burial *naked*, with the Cords about their Necks, which they had us'd to that bad purpose: And the Sense of this Dishonour had, by good Fortune, the intended Effect; for the rest were so mov'd at the shameful Spectacle,

cle, that they fell into their old Sobriety and Order again, and made no more Attempts of that kind: And yet *Gellius* says, from *Plutarch*, that these poor Creatures were under the power of a Distemper; but the Fear of such an infamous Burial, brought them to their Senses again: And so we may observe, I think, that in most of these light Distractions, the Reason is not so entirely lost; but that the Parties are capable of some sort of Arguments, and restrain'd by some particular Considerations, and Motives, of Love, or Fear, or Shame, or Honour.

The Christians also have thought fit (to shew in what degree of Abhorrence they had this Practice) to deny them Christian Burial, who have laid violent Hands upon themselves; and (not to trouble myself, or you, with what hath been the Practice heretofore of the ancient Christians, or is now of other Churches) it is directed so, in the first *Rubric*, before our *Burial-Service*; which is, you know, confirm'd by *Act of Parliament*; by which it becomes a Law of the Land, as well as of the Church. They are there rank'd with Persons *Unbaptiz'd*, and such as die *Excommunicated*; by which we may conclude, she reckons not Self-Murtherers among the Number of the *Faithful*; nor accounts them to be true Christians, and therefore cannot have that Hope of them, as she has of other Believers, who die in the Faith of Christ, and with Repentance, (for ought that appears;) and therefore cannot say the same Things of them in her publick Prayers.

And as the Church denies them Christian Burial, so the Civil Government did heretofore appoint they should be put into the Earth, and left there with a lasting Mark of Infamy; *They were to have a Stake driven through them*, which was not to be remov'd.

But notwithstanding both these Penalties, intended both by Church and State, to deter all others from the like unnatural and wicked Attempts, by these Disgraces and Dishonours done to the Dead, they are now buried as other good Christians are, because they are brought in *Distracted*: And if it be indeed so, there is no Reason why either the Civil Power should mark them with any Infamy, or why the Church should not have good Hope of them, who, tho' unfortunate, are yet as much in God's Favour, as those who are visited with any other Distemper, and happen to die, (as many do) without their Reason, and Senses. No Body can, with any Reason, conclude ought to the Prejudice of People that are truly distracted; for they are not Masters of themselves, nor consequently accountable for what they do, or omit to do: For *Revelation* being the Rule by which they are to walk, with respect to God, and Reason being the Faculty or Power by which they are to *apply* that Rule, their Rule must needs be unapplied, by their Defect of Reason. Now if the Civil Power has placed it in the hands of a *Jury*, to determine whether such a Self-Murther were distracted or no, and made them the proper Judges; I do not see but that as the *State* does, so must the *Church* acquiesce in such a Judgment as those

those legally empowered Men think fit to give. As Judges themselves give Sentence, not always according to their private Perswasion or Belief, but according to the publick Verdict of the Jury. This, I say, the rather, because it is, perhaps, the proper Justification of the Clergy, when any of these Self-Murtherers are buried according to Form. They are directed by the publick Judgment, and not by their private Opinion : For, should a Man be accidentally found dead, and the Jury should think fit to bring him in guilty of Self-Murther, the Minister, tho' he believed the contrary never so firmly, must not yet bury that Man according to Form ; because the Law is his Rule of Acting, and not his private Belief. The Law says, that Self-Murtherers, or those who lay violent Hands upon themselves, shall not be buried in such a manner ; but the Law does not say, *who* are Self-Murtherers, but leaves that to such and such particular People ; the Minister of the Law is therefore, in this point, to know who are Self-Murtherers, from *their* Mouth, not from his own, nor yet from the Opinion of the Publick. Now if a Minister may not bury the Dead, which are brought in guilty of Self-Murther, tho' he believe verily they died a natural Death, only because the Law says, Self-Murtherers shall not be so buried ; how should he be obliged to *refuse* burying the Dead, which are by Law brought in distracted, altho' he may well suspect they died by Violence, and with Deliberation ? *i.e.* Why should not the Law be his Rule in one Case, as well as it is in the other ? If the Scruple be, that the Ru-

bric does not determine whether these People be distracted or not, in their Senses, or out of them: But only whether they laid violent Hands on themselves, or no? The Answer is, That a *violent* Death is oppos'd to a *natural* one, which is not chosen, but unavoidable; but People may be poison'd through Ignorance and Mistake; and they may fall from a Precipice; and they may shoot themselves accidentally; and the *Event* is the same as if they had chosen these Deaths, but not the *Fault*; and there must be some, who are to judge whether they were *voluntary* or *casual*. And it is not to be presum'd the Church would condemn such as died these Deaths, tho' violent, yet accidentally, nor deny them the Favour of her Christian Offices; she must therefore trust some People to judge, whether these People died voluntarily or casually, and her private Ministers must be determin'd by this Judgment: And since true Distrac-tion is as innocent and blameless, as any other Ignorance or Mistake can be, she will no more deny her Christian Offices to one, than to the other: And therefore if a Christian, truly distracted, lay violent Hands upon himself, she may as well hope well of him, as of one who died a violent Death, by Poison, falling from a Precipice, or accidental Shot, and consequently bury him in Form, as she does, I think, the other. And in this Case she trusts the same People with judging and determin-ing, who they are that lay violent Hands upon themselves, that the Civil Power trusts; and she acts according to *their* Judgment, and not accord-ing to the private Judgment of her several Min-i-  
stres,

sters, Ecclesiastical or Civil. This, I think, will justify the Clergy, from contracting any Irregularity, by burying in Form those who are brought in distracted, as well as it will the Civil Officers, for not seizing on the Estate and Effects of the Deceased, which are forfeited by Law, if they were not distracted; altho' both Civil and Ecclesiastical Ministers may be perswaded that the Parties deceased were indeed Self-Murtherers; because the Laws do not trust them to *judge*, but to *execute* according to the Judgment of other People. You see, then, that the whole Matter devolves upon the *Jury*; and therefore, if the constant Mitigation of the Rigours of the Law against Self-Murtherers, be any manner of Encouragement to fall into that Practice, it will behove the *Jury* to consider well, whether the favourable Verdict they generally bring in, be always so righteous and so seasonable as they imagine: Whether, since the Wisdom of the Laws intends, that the Confiscation of Estates, the Undoing a Family, the shameful Burial she appoints, and the Denial of Christian Offices, shall deter Men from these horrible Attempts, the Mercy that defeats all these Intentions so constantly, be not more likely to continue on, than to repress these cruel Violences. This is what I said will deserve to be better considered, than it commonly is: For such is the natural Affection a Man bears to his Wife and Children, Family and Dependents; such is the Respect he has to his own Fame, such the Kindness he bears even to his own dead Body, that were he sure his Estate would be forfeited, and his Effects carried

from his Family ; were he sure he should be buried in the Highway, and with a Stake driven through him as a Mark of huge Infamy, and sure he should not be buried like a Christian, with those last Offices, perhaps he would give way to calmer Counsels, and be content to bear his Shame, or Pain, or Loss, till God saw fit to put an end to all his Sufferings by natural Means. And therefore an Instance or two of such Severity as is legal, well and wisely chosen, might prove a greater Preservative against these Violences, than such a constant and expected Mercy, as we always find, on these Occasions : For Men have now no Fear of *Laws* ; and when they have laid aside the Fear of God, they go about this Busines with great Readines, they are sure of favour in *this World*, and they will venture the *other*.

And if it be thought, that the Men who will venture God's Displeasure, will be little mov'd with any lesser Consideration of this Life, every Day's Experience may convince us of the contrary, and shew us, that God is offended much more cheaply, and easily, than any Neighbour we have, and that we really value his Anger, and his Threatnings less, than the least legal Penalties : However, it were good to try, now and then, whether the Execution of the Laws made to deter Men from Self-Murther, would not have better Effect, than the Courses that are generally taken, we see, have, And the Examples should be made (if one might choose) of some such as have lived very riotously and loosely, and spent almost all their Substance, and such as have justified and defended

fended, in their Lives, the like Practice in other People, maintaining it by Principles. The riotous and loose Livers would deserve this Usage best, and they would find the least Pity from the serious Part of Mankind ; and such a Punishment might be a Check to others, and keep them within bounds, and make them better Husbands, which is a Thing of more consequence than People imagine, Frugality being the Parent of many Virtues, and a Restraint to many Vices and Enormities. And if they, who have been known to justify these Practices by Principles, whilst they lived, were sure to be made Examples above others ; it might help to restrain others from taking such Liberties in Discourse, and from encouraging, thereby, those who would not, it may be, be so forward, without those bad Instructors. Such People will best deserve to be disgraced, and treated with all Rigour, because they do not only do this Wickedness themselves, but endeavour to propagate their destructive Principles, and such would meet with least Compassion ; which thing is always to be heeded in making Examples.

There will be room enough for Pity, and a tender Regard, to such whose unhappy Constitution, Make, and Frame, wrong Education ; false and mistaken Principles ; with great Weakness both of Body and Mind ; long and continued Pains, and dreadful and amazing Calamities, have driven to these Extremities. If Laws and Rules are ever to be broken, it were for such whose Miseries intitle them to all the World's Pity, and who have liv'd a regular, a sober, virtuous, nay, and a religious

Life. There, one has room to think, these violent Deaths might proceed from incurable Melancholy, and true Distraction ; and not from sudden, desperate, and impious Resolutions, which are usually the Fruits of a Life pass'd in luxurious, vicious and ungodly Courses ; when at last Men find themselves overtaken with dreadful Poverty, or see the Infamy and Ruin that has long been owing to them, come upon them with a Force that is not to be withstood by such as have abus'd their Reason, and neglected all Religion. And, indeed, without Religion, both Reason and Virtue will be found deficient, under these Temptations, if Reason and Virtue ever can be found without Religion. Take away the Belief of God, and the Life of the Soul, and of Rewards and Punishments in the other World, and the Miseries of Humane Life may sometimes be so pressing, that all the Considerations this World can afford, will hardly make it tolerable. But when a Man considers himself to be a Creature of God's making, and subject to his Laws and Government by all the Reason in the World, and to the common Dispensations of his Providence, and consequently not at liberty to withdraw himself from the Service appointed to him ; and tied, moreover, by Command, and, if a Christian, by voluntary Undertaking, to submit to the Will of God, in all Conditions of Life ; to accept the Evil with the Good, to be thankful for the one, and to improve under the other, by making good use of it : When he considers this, and that there is also a Life to come, where it will be impossible to fly from God

(tho'

(tho' we should do it here) and that the Miseries, our Disobedience and Impatience here would entail upon us, are in no sort to be compared with those which we escape by Death (which, tho' exceeding sharp, are yet not capable of being very long) when these, and such like Considerations, as Religion will supply the Mind with, come to Men's Assistance in their Streights, they will, with the Grace of God, vanquish the strongest Temptations to these Violences. We must, therefore, oppose the Will and Command of God, to the Desires of present Ease we have, in our Distress, and the future Mischiefs of his Displeasure, to the present ones we labour under, whether of Fear, or Pain, or Shame. And we shall then see, to whether side 'tis fittest to incline; whether the short Afflictions which are, here, as it were, but for a Moment, may be compared with the Wrath of God, which abideth for ever. In a word, unless the Mind be fortified with Arguments of Religion, and Considerations of the other Life, our natural Fortitude and Patience will yield to many violent Temptations, that beset Men, in this Vale of Misery. And therefore, few Attempts of this bad kind are made, till either Religion is wholly mastered, and its Impressions quite effaced, or Men are so misguided, as to think these Mischiefs may be done, and Religion (as not concern'd) be safe notwithstanding. But 'tis more consistent with Reason to lay aside all Religion, and disbelieve the whole, than, allowing the Justice of God, and the Life of the World to come, to think these Self-Murtherers are not to account severely for the Violences

Violences they have offer'd to themselves, if they are not indeed (what they are commonly reputed) quite lost to Reason, and distracted; of which God will judge much better than we can do.

As for those unhappy People, who lying under the dreadful Apprehension of God's Anger, accounting themselves *Vessels of Wrath, and fitted for Destruction*; and not being able to live under the Torment of that Thought, put an end to their miserable Lives; as they are most to be pitied whilst alive, so there seems to be the greatest Reason for sparing them when dead, since nothing in the World can look so like Distraction as that Dis-temperature of Brain, which makes them reason and act so strangely: For if they are, indeed, Vessels of Wrath; Is this the Way to give them any Ease? If they believe themselves confign'd to Pain and Misery in the other World, what do they get by throwing themselves into that Place of Torment before their time? This is to die for fear of Death, and indeed a great deal worse.

When condemn'd Criminals prevent their legal Punishment by dispatching themselves, they think they save themselves the Shame of dying publickly by infamous Hands: Vain Imagination that! But what can these poor People propose to themselves, by falling into the Hands of the living God a great deal sooner than (even according to their own Fears) they need to do, if they would liye as long as God would let them? Can anything be liker Madness than this, under such Perswasion? But such Perswasion is, itself, the maddest that a Christian

Christian can be fill'd with. These People are, very frequently, very good People ; or if they have been Sinners, they have long repented, and amended : 'Tis the Sense of their Guilt that lies so heavy on them ; they would give all the World to be forgiven ; they believe in God, and in Jesus Christ, the Resurrection, Life everlasting, and the World to come : They believe that Christ died to save Sinners : They do not know *one* Sinner in the World, besides themselves, for whom they do not think that Christ died, if that Sinner would repent, and believe the Gospel. Is it not near to Madnes, to believe that Christ died for such as repent, and believe the Gospel, and yet to distrust he died for *me*, who am so sorry for my Sins, that I would give the World (if it were mine) I never had committed them ? And would not, for any earthly thing, commit the like again ? And would purchase the Favour of God with my Blood, and who am quite oppress'd with the Dread of his Displeasure ? If this be not repenting and believing, no one can say what is ; and yet this is the Case of many of these unhappy People. Nothing therefore can be liker, or nearer to Distraction, than so to believe, and so to repent, as both to sorrow and amend, and yet conclude themselves *Vessels of Wrath*, and under God's Displeasure : For nothing is so contrary to all Sense and Reason, and the whole Tenor of the Gospel, as to believe that God is not reconciled to all penitent Believers in Jesus Christ ; and, without this, Christianity would fall to the Ground. These People, therefore, shut their Eyes to all the Light that can be opened on them ;

them ; and, by making such Conclusions as must be false, if Christianity be true, are not only miserable, but give such Marks of a wrong Turn in their Head, that to conclude they are near Distraction, is not only charitable, but reasonable. These Things I have been led to say, in considering the Case of *Self-Murther*, which, from the whole, will appear not only a huge Misfortune ; but, also, where Men have their Sense and Reason, a great and crying Sin ; and which, according to the Gospel-Covenant, excludes our Hope, by cutting off Repentance, upon which 'tis grounded. If there be any room for Charity, it is, that though all we see is wrong, yet we may not see all that truly is in the Condition of these poor People ; but God *does*, and he is infinitely merciful, and doubtless will consider, with his usual Goodness, all that can possibly deserve his Pity and Forgiveness. And tho' he is just, yet is his Justice tempered with such Mercy, that even the most provoking Sinner may desire, with *David*, *rather to fall into the Hands of God than Man.*



**F I N I S.**